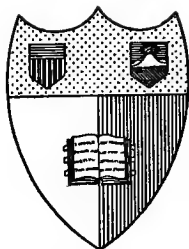


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[Coulon, photo.]

A TAHITIAN DARLING—PURE CASTE.

# THE ROMANCE OF THE SOUTH SEAS

BY

CLEMENT L. WRAGGE, F.R.G.S., ETC.

FOUNDER OF THE "WRAGGE MUSEUM," STAFFORD

GOLD MEDALLIST OF BEN NEVIS OBSERVATORY; DIRECTOR OF THE LATE CENTRAL  
WEATHER BUREAU, BRISBANE



WITH 84 ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON  
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1906  
5

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## P R E F A C E

THIS book is dedicated to my many friends in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, and especially to those who have attended my scientific lectures and "travelogues" there and also at Home.

It gives a faithful account of personal experience in two of the most interesting regions of the South Pacific. It attempts to portray French *régime* under the Southern Cross in two different aspects, deals with the administration of the New Zealand Government in the Cook Islands, and also touches on the Missionary question. Some may say that this last is extraneous to the subject. It is not so. Missionary work, especially in the Eastern Pacific, is so bound up with the history of the islands and with the natives that the two topics are inseparable.

My thanks are due to the Governors of New Caledonia and Tahiti for many courtesies. The illustrations form a special feature. The book, it is hoped, will be of interest to Australasians and others in our Empire in connection with French influence in the South Seas, and the ultimate destiny of New Caledonia and the adjacent islands with respect to the convict element. I have mainly adopted the historical present as the tense best suited to the descriptive text, and prefer the editorial "we" to the egotistic personal pronoun.

CLEMENT L. WRAGGE.





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PART I

“LA NOUVELLE ”

OR

THE PRISON OF THE PACIFIC



# THE ROMANCE OF THE SOUTH SEAS

## THE PRISON OF THE PACIFIC

### INTRODUCTION

OFTEN at the Brisbane Observatory, when seated in the official chair at the Central Weather Bureau—preparing the daily isobaric charts by which we were enabled to issue forecasts for all Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand—did we long for data from the coral strand and palm-clad vistas of New Caledonia, distant but 750 miles from the coast of Queensland.

Every one knows that “La Nouvelle,” as it is popularly called, is a French penal settlement, and thereby hangs a tale.

Now, the meteorologist, to be successful in his advices, must obtain information, by telegram if possible, from as far afield as convenient; and thus, with the opening of cable communication with the French Dependency, it occurred to us that to establish international meteorological relations there in mutual interests would be a stroke of policy productive of great practical benefit, especially in shipping, agricultural, and commercial concerns.

If figures from there were forthcoming, it was clear that we could extend the barometric isobars, sketched daily on the weather charts, across the intervening area of ocean; and

thus the better depict the great anticyclonic and cyclonic disturbances in all the majesty of Nature; and foretell with greater certainty what types of weather their sides, segments, and quadrants would bring.

Thus we determined to go to "La Nouvelle," and the Queensland Government, with a fine spirit of enterprise, cordially agreed to our scientific mission.

What a charm, what a keen fascination, has travel to the intelligent mind! All the world is a "playground," and change of latitude brings ever-varying phenomena, which, to a being in tune with the Infinite, are perpetual sources of instruction and profit.

The true traveller finds everywhere that Inscrutable Master with whom is allied every soul—finds Him in the rigours of a Lapland winter, in the palm-groves of the seductive tropics, in the arid wastes of the Sahara, on the salt-bush plains of wild Australia, in a storm in the "Forties," with the old man hanging on to the weather-rail, while the sailors shout and the albatross sweeps the surging blue wake; aye, and finds even God in those solitary cells, those danksome *bâtiments* of La Nouvelle Calédonie.

Duty first—that is the Englishman's maxim—but then we meant to make the most of our trip in *other* respects, to see life—Heaven save the word!—in Ile Nou, and other of those awful prisons, if by dint of diplomacy one could but gain access.

And we were all the more eager to see the Penitentiaries in New Caledonia itself, since we knew full well of those miserable *escapés* who braved the seas and sharks in open boats, with parched throats and skeleton frames, just to reach fair Queensland—only to be interned there as suspects and undesirable vagrants.

We could tell of one who evaded pursuit, who essayed a



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

THE BRISBANE OBSERVATORY.



new life in free Australia, married and settled there, but to be torn ultimately from wife, child, and a happy home by *Monsieur le Surveillant*, armed with extradition authority and all the provisions of international law.

Yes! The Weather Bureau at Brisbane adjoined the Police Court, and to it were the runaways sent, there to meet the French officer who took them back to the terrors of "La Nouvelle." No wonder we were interested!

So this portion of our book will deal mainly with general experiences in the convict settlement. We shall speak of the manners and customs of the people and of the resources of the country, and shall trouble the reader but little with the strictly scientific and official aspect of our visit.

## CHAPTER I

Bound to New Caledonia—Good-bye, Australia!—The Voyage—Temperatures Extraordinary—Current Bottles—Pretty Girls—Caporn the Trader—A Tale of Island Barter—Arrival—First Glimpse of Ile Nou—Nouméa—The Chain-gang—A Nouméan Restaurant—*Le Premier Déjeuner*—Botanical Notes—Early Market—Manuers and Customs.

AWAY, then, to La Nouvelle Calédonie, with our barometers and thermometers, bent on seeing all we could, and making the most of the privilege of human existence.

Human existence, forsooth! What an irony of fate to *les pauvres condamnés* whom we shall presently see! Oh, the pity of it!—the thought *would* come up.

From Brisbane we go first to Sydney to catch the boat for Nouméa.

“La Nouvelle” cannot complain of means of communication. There is the fine monthly service of the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes direct from Marseilles *viâ* Australian ports; and also the regular line from Port Jackson of the A.U.S.N. Company, besides tramp steamers and sailing ships.

We choose the latter company, and are soon aboard the steamer *Waroonga*, with our precious cargo of instruments, which are stowed in a large cabin, specially selected for the “Weather man” by the genial Calder, one of the best skippers afloat in the Pacific. Yonder goes a clipper, all sail set, bound to the island for a cargo of nickel.

The four days at sea pass all too quickly, what with noting the weather and taking observations.

Our data include also temperatures of natives when opportunity offers; and a Solomon Islander who acts as cabin boy consents to be operated on, and yields a value of 99·1 in perfect health.

“Well, Wragge, old man,” says the captain, “that’s a rum sort of observation, ain’t it?” as we tell him the result.

“Interesting but true, captain. Why, would you believe it! In the Gulf of Carpentaria, and in the land of the ‘Never Never,’ as we call Western Queensland, we’ve obtained temperatures of young and old black gins\* from 100 to 100·2 degrees by Kew tested thermometers held under the tongue for five minutes, the subjects being in tip-top condition.”

This satisfies the skipper as he tells old Lewis at the wheel the compass course, and goes below for a tap at the glass and a nip of whisky.

Occasionally we cast bottles adrift, tightly corked and sealed, to be religiously committed to the deep each day. In these are enclosed papers specifying the ship’s position, with a polite request in eight languages to the finder to forward the same to the Weather Bureau with a view to investigating the effects of wind and ocean currents on these elf-like messengers of the sea. We did the same on other trips, and many current-bottle papers have returned after thousands of miles’ voyage, and their history would form the subject of another romance.

Anon we note temperatures of the water and air, the former ranging from 68 degrees off Sydney Heads to 77 degrees as we cross the Tropic of Capricorn, and the latter between 74 degrees and 80 degrees—moderate readings in such latitudes for a December passage.

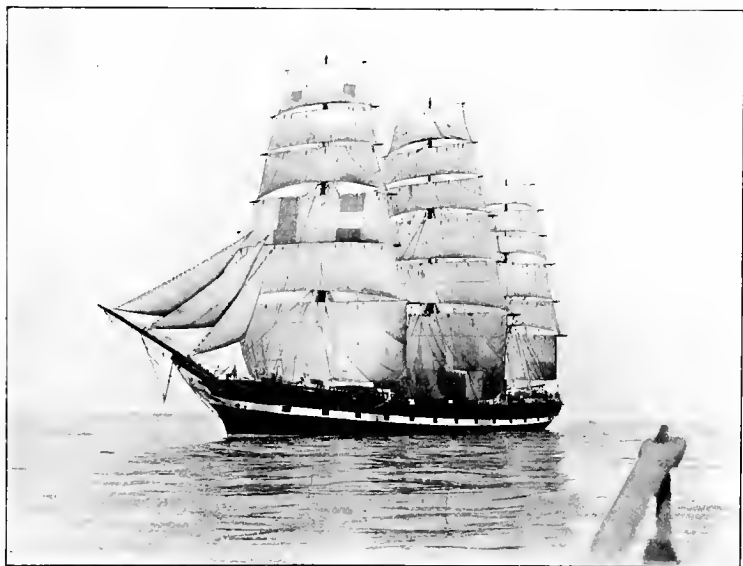
\* \* \* \* \*

But come! let us glance at the social aspect of the voyage, since meteorologic formulæ are not for every mood of mind.

\* Aboriginal women of Queensland.

Our passengers are few, but very interesting, and among them are several jolly schoolgirls in the glorious spring-time of the bewitching teens, bound to their tropic homes in the New Hebrides and Fiji for the Christmas holidays.

Moreover, a sturdy old island trader is with us, hard as



[H. Hughes and Son, photo.]

YONDER GOES A CLIPPER.

nails and the essence of jollity and goodwill, Caporn by name and a regular "white man," who, with his estimable wife, is returning to Nouméa from Queensland.

With him, besides the other girls, are Clementine and Loretta, two orphan half-castes, foster-fathered by the trader.

Oh! these glorious tropic evenings at sea. How one

luxuriates in the balmy air, how soft the Pacific zephyrs, how impelling to tales of love! The maidens sing sweetly by the break of the poop—those catchy airs of the “Summer Isles of Eden,” full of romance, that make one’s ideas of peace and tender passion a home in the Pacific with Mahinna in the palm thatch, free from care, and dark-eyed pickaninnies gambolling on the coral floor.

The pathetic agony of the refrain sung by such voices is quite too touching, so we follow with an antidote, select versions of those dear old chanties, “Blow! my bonny boys, blow,” and “Leave her, Johnny, leave her,” real sailors’ songs of the old time, racy of the deep sea and redolent of spun yarn, while Clementine and Loretta with pretty lips swell the chorus.

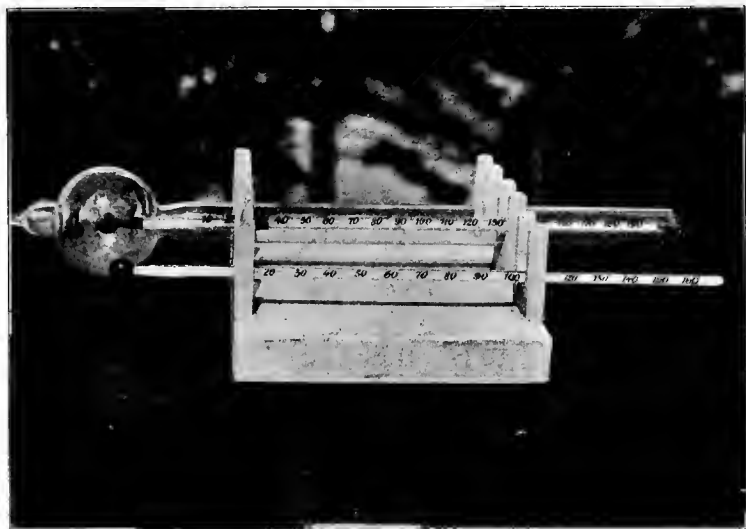
“For shame,” we hear some prude exclaim. “Fancy the director of a Government Weather Bureau indulging in such frivolity!”

Now, readers, we were once at sea; and *do* you imagine that we are some cynic parcelled with red tape and the etiquette of office? Do you suppose that because a man is a scientist he must needs be at zero with isobars for breakfast and isobrontons for dinner? Think you that we can eat the “black bulb *in vacuo*” and digest the rain-gauge? No! We love to feel warm life in our veins, to enjoy while we may—that is true philosophy. Live in the eternal “now,” and make the best of it; autumn leaves will come in time.

“Get me a ‘Royal Blend,’ steward,” cries Caporn. “I can’t sing, but I’ll tell you a tale of island barter as I know to be true, and maybe you gentlemen’ll want to do a bit of trading with the natives, when you know *how* to do it. Oh, it’s a good game, and plenty of dollars in it,” he goes on, “specially if you mix up religion, and give ’em a bit of hell-fire and brimstone.”

“Tell us all about it,” we exclaim, making for the smoking-room, “and let’s vary the entertainment.”

“Come on, then,” says Caporn, as he lights his pipe, and sends the smoke curling in fantastic spirals. “Oh, here’s my whisky; now I’ll feel fit.”



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

THE BLACK BULB *IN VACUO*.

The screw churns away, the cherub log tinkles, the “phosphorus” sparkles, and the old man begins:

### CAPORN'S STORY

“Well, boys, a skipper of my acquaintance got twenty tons of oil—real cocoanut oil, mind yer—only a bit ago, from two naked chiefs down Rotumah way, and sailed away with his cargo full up.

“ ‘How did he do it?’ you ask Well, ’twas this way.

“ ‘The cap’n, you see, had planned his game—bin there afore and knew his men.

“ ‘Get the whale boat ready,’ says he to the mate, ‘and then fetch me an old military cloak from the slop-chest, one of them moth-eaten ones with the brass buttons and blue-and-white facings; and bring one of the old helmets too, and mind and stick a white feather in it, d’ye hear?’

“ ‘Aye, aye, sir,’ says the mate, whose name was Cross.

“ ‘The cap’n, his name wor Sluggins, and a real ‘down-easter’ he was.

“ ‘All’s ready, sir,’ says Cross.

“ ‘Good,’ says th’ old man, and away he goes ashore in the whale boat with the ship’s bell, which he starts a-ringing, and two big chiefs all greasy and reeking came down from the village to meet him.

“ ‘The Lord has sent me to preach the Gospel to you,’ says he, in their native lingo, ‘and is very angry to find you naked. But I’ve got a cloak and a good fine hat, and maybe they’ll make you look a bit respectable. Now, you’ve got to take ’em and give oil in exchange for good value, or you’ll both go to the devil, and that’s sure enough. Besides, I’m agoin’ to preach in the old mission-house, and every labourer in the vineyard is worthy of his hire.’

“ ‘Now, an old missionary had been that way, but the church didn’t pay, and had been given up.

“ ‘The cap’n he harangues on an old gin case, and impresses them with the crime of nakedness in chiefs. So he gives the old cloak to the one fellow, with the buttons brightened up, and the helmet with the feather in it to th’ other, and gets five tons of oil for each—making ten in all—and bides his time.

“ ‘Soon the chief who had donned the big coat and turned



up the collar around his neck to make it look finer like was a-drippin' with sweat from stem to stern, for th' sun were vertical, and it ran in great dribbles down his swarthy black face, and was a-droppin' from his beard. Natural like, he comes up to th' other fellow and wanted his hat, and him with the hat—a great big helmet it was, yer mind—wanted th' other chap's coat with them buttons.

“So they set to a-fighting, and at last came up to the skipper, who made as though he were going quietly off to the schooner with the ten tons of oil.

“‘Me want 'em coat,’ said one in pigeon English—the chap with the hat.

“‘Gib it big hat,’ said th' other, him with the cloak.

“‘No got 'em,’ says old Sluggins. ‘All gone; anyway, I'll see.’

“Away he goes aboard an' fetches another of each from the chest where he had 'em all the time, gives 'em to the niggers with a benediction, and gets another five tons a-piece, making twenty altogether; so he ups anchor and away, and pays the last of his claims with the foretopsail.

“Aye, that's the way to do business!” laughs our trading friend, as he finishes his yarn, jingles his glass, and calls the steward. “Aye, they were good old times, those—like the days of Bully Hayes, and every one who has traded in the South Seas knows of *him*.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus, with yarns and “sing-song,” whist, and “smoke oh,” times of leisure quickly pass; and early on the fourth day, December 17th, the great central mountain chain of New Caledonia comes in sight.

Captain Cook first discovered the island in September, 1774, and the French seized it in 1853, and converted it into

a penal settlement ten years later. It lies just within the tropics, between the parallels of 20 and 22½ degrees south latitude, and is 250 miles long by 30 broad, with an area of about 9500 square miles.

As we near the land, the name truly seems a happy one. Away in the distance is Mont d'Or, so called from its golden appearance when bathed in the rays of the rising or setting sun.

New Caledonia, indeed! Oh, "La Nouvelle"! What human agony hast thou witnessed! What tales thou canst unfold! We shall see—all in good time.

The undulations and knolls of the dark coast-hills, in sharp contrast beyond the deep blue foreground of the sea, flecked with greenish patches of water around the outlying coral reefs, give a most striking effect; singularly enhanced by glimpses of the craggy peaks and highland burns of the main range, which, capped here and there with a fleece of cumulus cloud, or fantastically belted with wreaths of mist, call vividly to mind old Ben Nevis and similar scenes in bonny Scotland.

The smaller hills close to the sea are thickly covered with scrub, chiefly the *melaleuca viridi-flora* (genus *myrtacæe*), for which "La Nouvelle" is famous. It is allied to the ti-trees of Eastern Australia, and is locally known as the *naouilli*. We shall frequently refer to it later on.

The pilot boat is soon alongside, with the natty little pilot, so spic and span.

"Bon jour, Monsieur le Capitaine," says he; "bon voyage?"

She is manned by a native crew, fine, determined, and stolid-looking fellows, but lazy withal. The *indigène* of "La Nouvelle" in colour is deep chocolate brown with a dare-devil cast of countenance. His chief joy in life is hunting down escaped convicts, and in this he excels—more of him later.

Porting a little, and then to starboard, we soon round the capelets and bluffs which had hidden Nouméa so far from view.

Yonder is Ile Nou, that terrible islet of misery and degradation, and the glasses show the wretched convicts working in the quarries, attended by *surveillants* prim and perky.

Soon we are in a magnificent and almost land-locked basin, sheltered from the swell of the Pacific by picturesque necks of land and that "Island of Despair." Pretty bays on this side, and long reaches and arms of still water on the other, banked in by limestone cliffs, call vividly to mind the incomparable harbour of Sydney; and the whole is like Rio in miniature.

In front lies the town with its tableaux of iron roofs, dotted in between with the graceful fronds of the lovely cocoanut palm. Glimpses of red among the vegetation so richly embowering the houses indicate the beautiful *poinciana regia*, with its bright crimson petals, now in one blaze of flower, the *flamboyante* of the French.

Capping a prominent spur on the coast range at the back of the town is the Freemasons' Hall, profanely called by the uninitiated "La Maison du Diable," while on a prominence to the left is the Semaphore Station, whence ships are signalled.



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

NATIVE OF NEW CALEDONIA.

A few minutes more, and we are landing our delicate instruments, and conveying them to the A.U.S.N. Company's office, much to the wonder of the many South Sea Islanders surrounding, who look upon the Richard barograph as some implement of Satan.

Messrs. Johnston, the Company's agents, accord a hearty welcome, and give the assurance that they will do their utmost to make our important mission a success.

\* \* \* \* \*

How novel the surroundings! Hark! What is that even, jangling sound beating a time as regular as a metronome? Ah, we understand! New wharves, all heavily flanked with great blocks of stone, are being formed just yonder by prison labour. A gang of doomed *condamnés*, with every spark of self-assertion crushed out of them, is seen approaching with measured tread. The stricken fellows, looking the picture of despair, are dressed in plain straw hats and dirty calico blouses, belted with hideous chains—clang, clang—dangling from their waists, and stolidly they march on to the accompaniment of that odious music.

One of that very gang stopped short the other day at the call of Nature, and was shot in the hip for his intrepidity—so the story goes; and “man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.”

Hard, awry, and wizen features they have, showing up in characteristic outline on the close-shaven faces—great God! what histories are there portrayed!

A smart *surveillant*, in the neat, striking uniform peculiar to his office, marches alongside, and keenly eyes his men as they proceed to their thankless task, chained together in the tropics. Think of it, ye *habitués* of the London restaurants, ye who forsake your homes and dine out at the mandate of a stupid fashion! What would these men give for a cottage

home with vine and clematis! Yes, *men* they are, parts of God, however degraded—fragments of the Grand Soul of the Infinite—and it is impossible to repress a sense of pity as they pluckily plod along—clank, clank—quite indifferent to all around them. One's first impulse, had one the power, is to break the chains and set them free.

“Don't be mawkish,” says Johnston; “why, if these men were let loose they'd raid Nouméa.”

We admit the truth of it. Prison chains do not uplift; they make men desperate, and will never lead to better things. Rather shoot them at once and launch them for redemption in the other sphere.

One feels that the whole system is wrong and inhuman. A man sins. Well, let him be punished. Such is Nature's law; but let the penalty be the premium on apprenticeship served for admission to a higher life, not a *régime* that shall make of erring men very fiends. Punishment, in fact, should be elevating and ennobling, not crushing; it should, in a word, be corrective, protective, and reformative in accordance with the laws of cause and effect.

Such were our feelings on this the first introduction to the convicts of “La Nouvelle,” and subsequent experience during residence and travel in the island did but tend to strengthen a sympathy in their favour, as will duly appear.

\* \* \* \* \*

Having deposited the instruments in Johnston's office, we are soon reminded that it is *onze heures*, eleven o'clock, and therefore *kiki* time, as the hour of *déjeuner* is familiarly called; in fact, all offices, shops, and warehouses are now closing.

The elder brother cordially invites us to breakfast with him, and explains that it will be fully two hours ere his bureau reopens—the interval being devoted to the quiet discussion of *déjeuner*, followed by the refreshing siesta so

necessary and reasonable in tropical countries in the middle of the day.

For the moment we adjourn to Monsieur Junot's well-appointed restaurant adjacent, and are offered a glass of vermouth as an appetizer, instead of that gentle "nip" far too familiar to Australians.

The bar is decorated with a formidable array of syrups and many cordials, and "O.V.G." has to take a back seat. Lemonade and ginger-ale are nowhere and are much missed. A large seltzer-gene is, however, at hand, and yonder is a group indulging in *eau de seltz et cognac*, a favourite beverage in Nouméa, and offering to bet a *dix sous* on the result of some transaction the nature of which does not transpire.

Soon we are rolling along in a comfortable *voiture*. It is driven by a *libéré*, or ticket-of-leave man, one of a pitiable, down-trodden class which predominates in "La Nouvelle," and is unrighteously regarded as containing only the very dregs of society.

Away we go—"En route cocher, dépêchez-vous!" yells Johnston—past the Banque de l'Indo-Chine, the only banking establishment of the country.

Here are clumps of cocoanut palms, their exquisite foliage gracefully yielding to the soft south-easters so indicative of "the Isles of Eden"; and there are the broad leaves of the banana and graceful paw-paw.\* The gorgeous *flamboyante* forms most striking avenues along the fine streets.

So, skirting a pretty bay and passing the wooden shanties of islands' boys close to the water's edge, we go to the Quartier Latin, ascend a knoll, and alight at our host's pretty villa.

A light repast, with the pleasant accompaniment of *vin ordinaire*, in thorough French style, is much enjoyed, and we

\* The paw-paw is the *Carica papaya* of botanists. Tough meat hung under its leaves will become tender. The fruit is delicious.

proceed to the verandah and employ the siesta hour with a cigarette and in making notes.

The view over the blue harbour, with Ile Nou in the distance and the rich vegetation of the tropics all around, is beautiful beyond expression. Now the merry chirp of the cosmopolitan sparrow is heard, and anon the swallow goes darting past.

Strolling around, we see the bird's-nest fern (*asplenium nidus*), which grows as wild in the Caledonian bush as in the Queensland scrubs; but the "stag-horn" and "elk horn," so luxuriant in the bush of Eastern Australia, are here quite rare. The oleander in full flower and the spiny yucca, aloes and prickly pear, with the yellow of the buddlea and red of the romantic hibiscus, lend also their touches to the rich colouring.

Crotons of many tints and quaint-looking cycads are clustered around by the well-known Madagascar periwinkle (*vinca rosea*) in one bath of bloom; and the sombre leaves and pithy bark of the *naouilli* on yonder hill add toning to the picture, and give very pleasing impressions to the enthusiastic botanist.

There is also *arundo donax*, the so-called bamboo of the southern parts of Australia, and almost a pest in Southern Europe. This is the reed with which Achilles is said to have thatched his tent, and was, of course, introduced.

In this place we may also mention the lantana (*verbena gigantea*), a greater nuisance in New Caledonia than in Queensland, it having spread to such an extent as to render thousands of acres useless. A Monsieur Boutan introduced it as a choice plant from Tahiti, and the people have heartily blessed him. The so-called weed, *sida retusa*, from which hemp can be obtained when folk know how, also finds a congenial soil and climate; and this, with two kinds of acacia, is another pest of the country. Couch grass is abundant.

Of course our first business is to establish the Meteorological

Observatory, so we quickly return to the Agency, where the instruments had been left, and soon succeed in obtaining a suitable plot of ground adjacent to the A.U.S.N. Company's office.

The remainder of the week (December 18th to 24th) is entirely occupied with such work as erecting and testing instruments, taking levels, fitting batteries for the electric thermometers, and such-like; besides initiating Messrs. Johnston, who had kindly offered to act as weather watchers temporarily, into the mysteries of meteorologic lore. We need not trouble the reader with an account of this work, which is entirely of a scientific nature. Our desire is to give to the world just a rough sketch of what we were privileged to see in the convict isle—and the prisons will follow all in due course.

\* \* \* \* \*

In size Nouméa is equal to a medium English country town, and the general style of architecture is of the "shanty" type. No other word so well describes it.

This style also obtains largely in Australian bush townships, especially in the north, but there the houses are built on piles capped with galvanized iron, as a protection against those villainous white ants which in "La Nouvelle" are unknown.

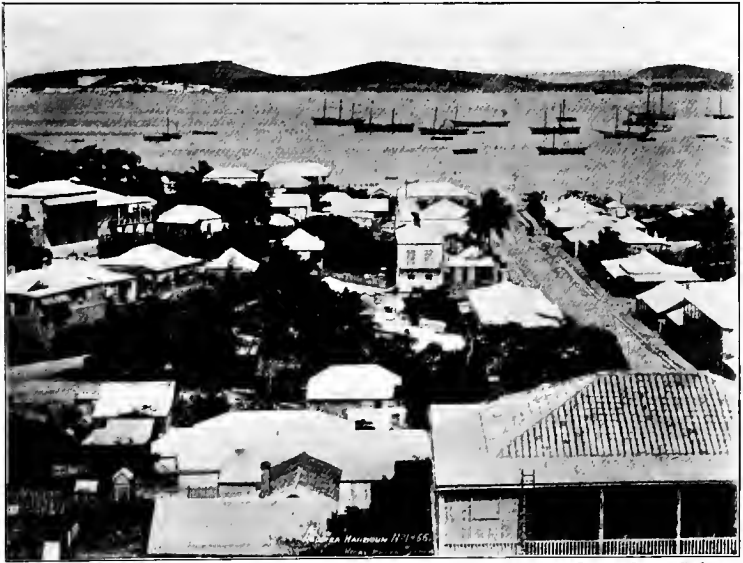
Wooden houses are generally on a stone foundation, and some are built of bricks and stone entirely. Louvred shutters are common on the verandahs; and behind them, half opened, may be seen many a pretty face, and the half-caste beauty ever so coy, peering at the stranger, and smiling pleasantly as he walks past. Most places are roofed with ugly corrugated iron, but some with red tiles, giving a most pleasing effect.

Beautiful patches of garden surround the tasteful villas, rich with the generous tones and warm luxuriance of the tropical flora already in part described.

Of course, the place is essentially French in character, and the convict element is very strong.



Truly our worthy neighbours have solved the problem of how to live comfortably and rationally in the tropics. By three o'clock in the morning the people are astir—this is the time, too, when a *condamné* is aroused if doomed to the guillotine *à cinq heures*—fruit is coming into market,



[Kerry and Co., photo., Sydney.

GENERAL VIEW OF NOUMÉA.

stalls are being erected, and the coffee-man is hurrying to his post.

Half an hour later *cinquante centimes* will procure a delicious cup of *café au lait*, and by sunrise the whole market is in full swing. Here are displayed turtles' eggs, and all manner of fruit and vegetables: the peach, tomato, endive, and carrot being especially conspicuous, while pine-apples and bananas are but

poorly represented. On every imported bunch of bananas a duty of *dix sous* has to be paid as an encouragement to local growers and a protective measure.

General fruit-growing for market in *large* quantities is not undertaken, on account of indifferent means of transit from the country. Yet, as the soil and climate are eminently suitable, a large export trade in oranges, lemons, bananas, and other produce could readily be established were this difficulty overcome—a little capital with energy and enterprise would work wonders—and one fancies the result were facilities greater. What really is wanted are light railways, and surely the convicts could not be employed in a more useful task.

Asparagus, grapes, and even strawberries are at market; but the latter are very small, and cost a franc a handful. The fish market is particularly well attended, and the supply is plentiful enough, as these seas teem with fish in many varieties.

No one who has seen them can forget the swarthy *pêcheurs*, in themselves a very study, singing in musical tones and steady rhythm, “Vivants! vivants! Poissons vivants!” with a high pitch and copious perspiration in the effort.

\* \* \* \* \*

All Nouméa turns out to market; it is the event of the morning *jour par jour*.

See the thrifty little housewife, the smart *gendarme*, *surveillant*, and divers *libérés* who can never be mistaken. A “something” stamps them at once—those prison lines, carved into the very features, can never be effaced. Then there are Algerian prisoners in picturesque Eastern dress, and the native Caledonians, Loyalty Islanders, and New Hebrides boys—with many a dusky Venus—all mingle in the streets leading to the market.

And the milk-seller with his bottles plies a busy trade, and all is life, and the air of the tropic morning simply delightful.

By half-past five is heard the merry sound of the blacksmith's hammer, and then the real work of the day commences, offices and warehouses opening their doors on Sundays as on other days—all except the local bank, which alone keeps *le dimanche*. Sunday afternoons and *les jours de fêtes* are the only recognized holidays.

At eight o'clock a gun is fired from the French man-o'-war, and time is regulated. Thence to eleven the greater part of business is transacted, when, as we have seen, *déjeuner et siesta* follow, with the happiest results fitting the climate.

And the streets at mid-day seem quite deserted. But work is resumed at one o'clock, and continued till *sept heures*, when the ringing of bells at the "débit bars" announces the hour of *dîner* and rest. Little groups at the *cafés* assemble beforehand, and *absinthe et gomme* sharpens the appetite.

Dinner is *par excellence* the meal of the day, followed by the customary *café et cognac* and an Algerian cigarette.

Afterwards there's nothing, save cards and dominoes, but to go to bed, except on the band nights, when the convicts play; or perhaps one may indulge in a walk of exploration.

## CHAPTER II

More of Nouméa—The Convict Band—"Merci pour la musique"—Barmaids—Baths at a Premium—A Famous Washerwoman—Sanitation—Islands' Natives—Piebalds—Crude Surgical Treatment—Candidates for Wives—Enterprising Frenchmen—A Midnight Ramble—Bond *versus* Free—Pity the Poor *Libérés*—"Allez de l'Hotel"—A Novel Experience—A *Libéré* in Disguise.

WE have just referred to the convict band. Who that has heard it can ever forget?

We listen, are enthralled, and shall ever remember.

Twice a week do the *condamnés* come, chosen from the rest for their musical ability, away from that prison camp, that awful Camp Montravel, just beyond yon pine-clad hill, *sept kilomètres la bas*, and march in file to the Place des Cocotiers, or Coconut Square.

There on a kiosk surrounded by the palms and gorgeous *flamboyantes* they play to the people, play divinely, like some band in high heaven, while smart *surveillants* in blue uniforms and silvered epaulettes, looking ever so dapper and prim, watch with an eagle eye. The time is perfect, the concert sublime; and no players in the world can teach sweet music to those worn-faced wearers of the plain straw hats—those figures called men in the calico blouses.

To them are accorded by universal consent not a token of praise, not a clap of *encore*, not even one murmur of approval. God-like in harmony, musicians in soul, they are convicts still. Master Eternal, what a life is theirs!

Think of it, ye blessed of the Palais Royal, ye *devouées* of the Bois and grand swelling opera! Yes, ponder and consider. Why treat them so? Sinned they have, but the Christ would forgive; lift up the fallen by a note of sympathy, and strike on their hearts the chords of Love.

We venture a "Bravo!" in a muffled voice.

The *surveillant* stops and looks sternly up. "Non, monsieur! *silence, je vous prie*—the fellows are convicts and come but to amuse you; encourage them not."

The conductor of the band, outwardly a stoic who submits to the worst, was once a professor renowned in music and famous in France, welcomed in society and among the *élite*. An *affaire d'honneur*, a fit of passion, and—presto! he shot a paramour, a lover of his wife. The law was inexorable; he was sentenced to transportation and exile for life, and "La Nouvelle" claimed him with all its horrors, its eternal degradation.

Ah! could he but speak with an impulse of the soul and tell his sufferings—those agonies of mind—to that assembled throng, tell of the tortures of wakeful hours, of old fond hopes all dashed and broken, of loving mother and once cherished wife!

"Maddened by her dishonour," he would say, "I did it. In blind fury and with reeling brain I killed that man, cut out his treacherous heart, cooked it as an *entrée* over a slow fire, and forced my Babette to eat the morsel for supper. Then I told her all, and flung her away from me. Pity me," he would continue, "you who reckon of the power of love; I loved her madly, and madness seized me; but the great God knows all, and with Him is mercy—with Him is justice."

But no, speak he may not, and endures, and still endures, silent yet eloquent, and lives right on, as, wielding his *bâton* to "The Judgment of Paris," the soft, clear strains fill the air and vibrate through the cocoanuts "to that Audience Beyond,"

where nothing is lost, and where every thought of the human Ego becomes in fact a *real thing*.

Never can the picture be effaced from our memory ; Coconut Square is impressed on the brain, and so, to be sure, is the man with the *bâton*.

Ignoring the *surveillants*, and seizing the occasion as the convicts march in single file back to Camp Montravel, we sidle alongside and whisper as they pass, "Merci, messieurs, merci beaucoup pour la musique, vraiment c'est superbe."

For this we receive the thanks of the eyes, touching indeed, but not a word dared they utter.

*Bon soir*, poor devils ! Sleep as you may, and dream of childhood !

\* \* \* \* \*

Nouméa can boast of hotels galore where one lives well enough on ten francs a day, barring all luxuries. In this are included *déjeuner* and dinner, *vin ordinaire* to one's heart's content, and a comfortable bedroom all matted and neat. The smaller places charge but six.

Unless arrangements are specially made, the *café au lait* in early morning is an extra. We prefer it in the market, at five o'clock, from young Jeanette with the liquid eyes.

For the smiles and attentions of the various "Hebes" at the *débit* bars and *salons*—for their love-looks and all the rest !—well, if you want them, be prepared to pay in cognacs and armagnacs, champagnes *et bons vins*—yes, and in coin too.

Most of these ladies hail from Sydney, and are of English descent. Some make money—we need not say how. The Government made laws, they would not submit ; and many were expelled for refractory conduct, and returned to Australia, whence they came.

The bars are open without restriction—Sundays as on other days—till midnight, and even beyond, for the French

can use the gifts of life, and seldom abuse the cheering cup—a *monsieur* drunk is a *rara avis*.

You want a bath? It is extra too. “Bain, monsieur? un franc!” says smiling Cremieux, showing the way. This is all very well; but when you have to sluice first one arm and then the leg from an absurd little hand-basin, finally pouring its contents over your body, or sticking your head under a dribbling tap in lieu of a “shower,” it is aggravating enough to be charged such an impost.

There is an excellent water service from Prix d’Eau, a place in the hills, well named indeed, some fifteen kilomètres distant; but then it is not always turned on, only at certain times. For a wash after hours one has to perform as just described, and the franc is charged all the same, with many apologies, a smiling face, and the genial “shrug.” “Pardon, monsieur,” says Lapelle, our host, “mais voilà le bain, et le savon est cher.” We should prefer a swim, but cannot get one.

Sea-baths are needed vastly for the people—and shall we say the convicts too?—well fenced in against the sharks and those ugly yellow sea snakes that infest the coast. One such place only exists, solely for the soldiers. It is *quatre kilomètres de la ville*; and none but the military dare bathe their bodies in that selected spot.

As for clothes-washing—well, “Madame la Blanchisseuse” is adjacent, and she advertises thuswise on a large board, in dauby paint and big fat letters, with French and English side by side—

“*Madame Vevier,  
Blanchisseuse,  
Gros et Fin,  
Prix Modéré.*”

“*Madam Vevier,  
Washerwoman,  
Fine and Big,  
Price Moderate.*”

Hotel sanitation is a minus term. You visit the cabinet, all men must—evil to him who evil thinks—but experience will teach you to tip the *portier* and test the grand virtues of *cindre à l'eau* well in advance.

Yet Nouméa is healthy, decidedly so—no malaria, dysentery, or other such maladies inherent to the tropics. The same may be said of the whole island, and many attribute its general healthiness to the *naouilli* tree, which is to New Caledonia what the eucalyptus is to Australia, purifying the air by its volatile properties and amount of oxygen given out, and sending forth its sweet odours on the wings of the wind.

As for the climate, it is positively superb; no extremes of temperature—no hot winds one day and a southerly buster the next, as in Australia—just an even, stimulating air in which to exist is a pleasure of life. The fresh roaring trades are a tonic in themselves.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have mentioned the natives from the islands adjacent to New Caledonia. Nouméa is full of them, especially “boys” from the Loyalties and New Hebrides, and their labour is a staple item.

The native Caledonian refuses household or menial work. Such is beneath his aspirations. He makes his women or *poppinées* do actual labour, contenting himself by directing their operations, and offering an obliging hand should the weaker vessel “give out.” His part in nature is to superintend. He watches his crops and the growth of the taro patch, while the women hump buckets and till the soil, just in yon areas beyond the town.

And if the Fates favour, and the Government be kind, the native of “La Nouvelle” enters the Government service and becomes a *gendarme indigène*. Then his part is to hunt to the death runaway *condamnés*, or belabour them with a club, ever



so hideous, for small breaches of discipline. Anon he searches outward-bound vessels for *escapés*, or acts as policeman and keeper of the peace.

‘ Ah! there goes a band of swarthy Solomon “boys,” just from the islands by that schooner yonder; and following behind are some dusky beauties in gaudy wrappings, having



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

A GROUP OF LOYALTY ISLAND NATIVES.

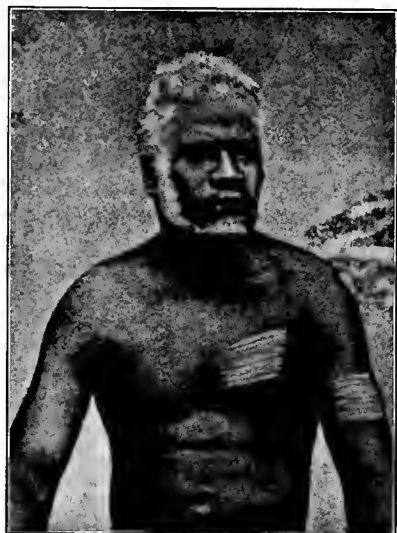
preferred Caledonia to being left behind. They are all for labour-hire, and are going to a *depôt* across the way, from where they are sold to the highest bidder for so many years. One strapping fellow from the Solomon Islands brings twenty napoleons, and some of the girls fetch somewhat less.

All day do they stand open for selection, but none may be out after 8 p.m. At that hour any not hired must retire to their

vessel or camp in the humpies erected on the beach. Those engaged sleep among merchandise, on the premises of employers, among stacks of timber, bags of coprah, or in any odd corners. Wages are given; some get thirty francs a month, just as a *douceur*, and this rate applies to such labour generally.

Just children of Nature these islanders are, loving flowers with a passion all their own.

They roam Nouméa, or pursue their work, ever decked with the scarlet hibiscus, the peachy rose, or the red geranium; while the blue plumbago and yellow of the tecoma lend brighter hues, completing the charm. The sprigs stick jauntily above the neck, or poise in sweet chaplets on the black woolly head. Their hair, in fact, is the only protection from the tropic sun, and is often besmeared with lime, not only to kill vermin, but



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

A LOYALTY ISLANDER DAUBED WITH LIME—  
NOUMÉA.

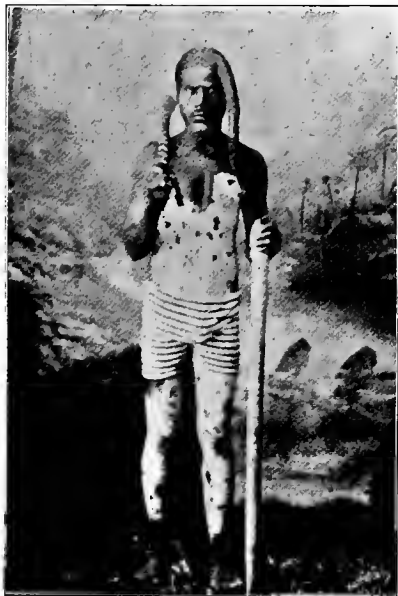
also to bleach it to a ruddy hue which is much admired. They daub with lime also the black shining chest, making smudges of white in pleasing contrast; and if they can get a rooster's feather or the legs of a crayfish to adorn the ears—why, then the toilet is complete to their intense delight, so greatly does the ornamental take precedence of the useful.

'Tis sweetly æsthetic, this island flower-worship, and a stern rebuke to "my Lady Vere" who adorns her with plumes of the rarest birds. Go to the islands, "Grande Duchesse Beauclerc," and learn from the natives a lesson of mercy.

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Johnston's "boys" from the Loyalty Islands—he owned many—are deputed to clear away *débris*, sink holes, and generally prepare the ground outside his office, where for the time we are soon to fix our thermometers in the well-known louvred screens invented by the late Thomas Stevenson, C.E., of Edinburgh. Thus we see much of them, and like them the more.

Oddly enough, one of these fellows, our principal labourer—a native of Lifou whom we called Louis, but whose real name was Batten—enjoys the distinction of a piebald skin. Of this he is mightily proud, and many a half-franc does he make by exhibiting that part of his body so ludicrously mottled. Nature, indeed, originally endowed him with a unique source of wealth. We add to his store by two francs. For this consideration, and with a grin of satisfaction, he allows us to photograph him naked as at birth, though shivering with



[Peace, photo., Nouméa.]

A SPOTTED SKIN IS SOMETIMES SEEN.

fright as the camera is applied. Sorry we cannot supply a copy for illustration—a few samples only are left, and these are required for anthropologists and students of the curious. Barnum, to possess him, would have given a fortune, and doubled it in a twelvemonth—to men only.

Yet Batten is not quite singular in this respect. A spotted skin, mottled even like a leopard, is sometimes seen among natives of the islands west of Samoa; one we could mention was black and white all over, caused by a freak of the epidermis, yet healthy enough and in fine physique.

For dress these islanders wear a *sulu*, or wrapping, just covering the loins. This usually consists of a piece of blue or checkered print, two yards in length, which is wound around and twisted inwards, so encircling the abdomen, never being fastened in any other way. An old red ensign, or a Union Jack, makes a capital *sulu*, and is much prized; but the Tricolour for a waistcloth is never seen. They seem to prefer Britishers to the French, and seldom learn to speak the Gallic tongue. By way of further adornment, they resort to the blue-bag on washing day, and delicately colour the eyelids, which gives a very striking appearance.

These Loyalty "boys" have a singular way of healing each other's wounds. Our lad Batten—puffing and blowing in the effort to sink a hole twelve feet deep for the ground thermometers, while the perspiration streams down his sooty back in long white rills from his lime-bedaubed head—contrives somehow to cut his leg; whereupon another "boy," called Nevva, comes running up and promptly applies ammonia to his comrade's sore place in a very rough-and-ready fashion. More ludicrous treatment could not be witnessed, yet 'tis very effective, and doctors understand, if no one else.

Their only medicine for internal complaints seems seawater. Every Sunday morning squads of these fellows repair

to the beach and drink till they vomit. This process, they say, washes the stomach.



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

LOYALTY ISLANDERS EMPLOYED AS SAILORS ON THE NEW CALEDONIAN COAST.

Many of the Loyalty Islanders are employed as coastal sailors, and capital seamen they are.

Eligible bachelors seeking wives make their wants known by two locks of hair, long and hanging near the left ear. These

they redden by the liming process, keeping the remainder short, black, and curly, and adorned with an elegant bamboo comb. This invariably attracts girls seeking matrimony, and is a powerful aid to that natural selection which in the Pacific is a positive quantity. Thus one never hears of divorce, and all natives are happy in their way, which is the way of God.

The island "boys" love to learn to write, and when they can manage to form the letters, scribble their names on anything handy. To this the 'Mauritius hemp' (*furcræa gigantea*), introduced from Tahiti in the early days, bears ample testimony. The hills by Nouniæa are covered with it, and the thick fibrous spikes are carved with such titles as "Quiko," "Oaroo," "Cakke," and so on; while the names of the girls, "Nuna," "Sinna," and "Titha," also appear.

This plant yields an excellent fibre, which *libérés*, in well-directed efforts to lead new lives, use in the making of bags or satchels worked in the finest tracery. Who shall say that this enterprise does not command support? The *fourcroya* thrives well in Australia, and especially in Queensland; and many in the Commonwealth, who idle their time and loaf at street corners, cannot do better than learn from the *libéré* lessons of industry and a lucrative business. In fact, it would pay to grow the plant on a large scale for commercial purposes.

But come, reader! we've had enough of Kanakas for the present, and a full description of the native of New Caledonia, his mode of life and general habits, we reserve for a later chapter. Let us look once again at the French in the tropics, and go to the prisons later on. Then we shall open the eyes of society in Britain, and show them in London how *condamnés* live.

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The only excitement in all Nouméa is caused by a fire, which seldom happens. There's no brigade, and, should a fire occur, every one handy "passes the bucket."

To one from Australia and the outer world the sense of isolation is oppressive enough; but this, to some extent, is now relieved by the ocean cable which connects the island with Australia, and thus with the world.

Yet some people liked the old *régime*. “Je n’ai besoin d’un cable,” you hear one say; “Spoilt my business,” adds an English merchant, though how or why is not apparent. To the convicts the cable is a *bête noire*. Should one essay to escape, and succeed in putting to sea in a stolen boat, the Australian police are at once advised. Others, again, welcome every progress, and to many the cablegrams are a very “god-send”—to none more than to the Weather Bureau and to the newspapers.

*L’Avenir*, *La Calédonie*, and *La France Australe* are the daily journals, all well edited and replete with news.

The telegraph runs from south to north, and the lines are maintained by convict labour.

The enterprising Governor, whom we had the honour of meeting—cultivated, kind, and ever sympathetic—spoke strongly in favour of our scientific mission, and was much interested.

This was expected, for it is well known that the enlightened French are the first of all nations to further education and the march of Science, and are far above the English in that respect. There is no gainsaying the fact.

With deepest loyalty we are, nevertheless, bound to say that our Rulers in England and elsewhere in the Empire regard scientific research as a minus quantity. They shut up observatories—as, for instance, Ben Nevis—and give scientific workers but a labourer’s wage, failing to remember that the country that divorces noble science is bound, sooner or later, to go to the wall. That our colonies are more enterprising, but not enterprising enough, is equally true.

So here we pay that tribute to our Gallic neighbours which

is but just and thoroughly deserved. See what the immortal Pasteur has done, and *ab uno disce omnes*.

Yes, a grand and noble people are the French. They are liberal and broad-minded, never boorish, and we like them much and would do them all honour. Thanks to King Edward, they and we English are now the fastest friends, and from the former we phlegmatics, often so dull, narrow, and stupid, can learn a lot. France can teach us to live in the pure enjoyment of life; France shows us the way of the gentle Christ, save as to the *condamnés*. "Be happy while ye may," says a warm-hearted *monsieur*, "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." "Be rational while gay," is the Frenchman's creed.

We agree with them in all but the treatment of prisoners, and are sure that they will chivalrously pardon us for sympathy with the wretched convicts. We have taken, and shall take, the humanitarian view, and shall let the world know of the terrors of Ile Nou, the horrors of Bourail, and the hell of Camp Brun.

The Governor, indeed, was surpassingly courteous; his secretary genial and politeness distilled; and long shall we remember that notable interview.

In times gone by the Nouméan settlers formed one large family, the factor of nationality being barely recognized. Even now all live together on the best of terms, though cliques have arisen and the British *en masse* keep much to themselves. The hospitable Governor, however, gentleman that he is, shows no distinction, so long as his visitors belong to the free; and the total free white population is about ten thousand.

But the poor *libéré* who has atoned for his sins, and who ever essays the passage of the barrier, has not the remotest chance. The stigma is always on him. *Liberté, égalité, et fraternité* is the one grand maxim, save as for ever the convict



strain, and despite the small scandals of little communities from which Nouméa is by no means exempt.

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Yes, we frankly avow that we pity especially the *libérés* with all our soul, and more particularly those who do not hold a *concession* or grant of land. The lot of *concessionnaires*, as they are termed, is happier.

Mademoiselle Grissette is honoured indeed ; she follows her profession, which is no degradation ; she may even attend a Government function. Not so the *libéré*. He is a "ticket-of-leave" man, and "once a convict always a convict."

Only let a man experience Ile Nou, or a fraction of the ordeal of the other penitentiaries, and he is marked for life and for ever branded.

With us it is not so. A man is convicted ; well ! he atones and pays for his mistake, be it even twenty years, and may rise again.

But to climb under French jurisdiction to a once-held position in free society is practically impossible. The sinner falls indeed, but if he "works out his karma," or his sin be small, he is free in time to earn his *sept francs par jour*, or a franc an hour as a lumper on the wharves ; free to till his *concession*, to tend his bananas and cull his cocoanuts ; free to weave those beautiful fibre baskets, and chisel those exquisite carvings on the nautilus and pearl shells which fetch such handsome prices from the traveller. Still, he is a *libéré*, a time-served man, and as such is he treated, and always will be.

Altogether there are about 3800 *libérés* ; and 7000 convicts actually prisoners.

All the *condamnés* in the Dependency are divided into five classes, and they may officially rise to the first class from a lower one and become *libérés* by good behaviour. But God help the poor wretches in the fifth ; some of them have

sentences *beyond* natural life, cumulative sentences by French law which far exceed a hundred years. To such there is no hope for improvement. It has all been squashed by the fearful *régime* of prison life, as we shall presently see.

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Now, here is an experience in Nouméa itself. We have been working at the Observatory all the long day, from *café* in the market till dinner at seven, and are bent upon seeing the town at dead of night, as thoroughly as we once explored Damascus, San Francisco, and other such places, said to savour of daggers and mysterious disappearances.

“Don’t,” says a countryman, “or you’ll regret it.”

Vainly does he portray a stab by the knife and some savage grip in yon murky alley-way.

Turning the ear against all entreaty, we sally forth, expecting conditions worse than Port Said ere the canal was finished. But, go where we will, all is order, quietude, and peace.

Haply some *gendarme* looks askance. “Bon soir, monsieur, je suis Anglais,” instantly pacifies him.

So do we ramble, first round one turn and then round that, up here and down there, but no sign of disorder is anywhere apparent, for the fact is that, owing to the excellent *gendarmerie*, one can live with greater safety in Nouméa than in many of the big cities of the world. The streets, cast over by the glare from the gas lamps, are practically deserted, and barely a sound save the measured tread of an occasional patrol.

At length we feel tired, and stroll to a *débit*, one of the small hotels, for ’tis barely midnight, and laws for closing seem only made for those who need them. Still, everything is order and decorum. Here a group playing *tivoli*, and another at cards. It resembles the scene at a provincial club.

An *eau de seltz*, with a modicum of cognac, goes down with a zest, and we ask the man sitting at the table next adjacent

to join us. He bows with deference and politely accepts. We converse as friends and rub up our French.

“Monsieur est Anglais ?” says he.

We avow the impeachment.

“Vous allez promener à minuit, monsieur ?”

Yes! we declare, we like the quiet, and would see the cathedral by the austral light.

“Venez-vous avec moi ?”

“Avec plaisir, monsieur, j’irai avec vous.”

So does he join in our midnight ramble, and obligingly points to the items of interest, for ’tis by no means dark.

We speak of astronomy, and the laws of the weather, go to the church, so sombre in the starlight and under the palm trees silhouetted against the sky. Altogether, our companion, if not nobly born, is a gentleman and a son of France, finely bred and tastefully dressed.

On do we stroll past La Place des Cocotiers till we reach our hotel.

He hesitates at first, but ventures to follow as we offer refreshment, for the bar is yet open.

Judge of our amazement when the damsel in waiting, with unutterable scorn, addresses our *camarade* so, and in thus wise—

“Allez-vous-en! bête! Allez de l’hôtel immédiatement! Do you hear ?”

He looks us wistfully full in the face and with pleading eyes; and then, with an aspect of utter despair and the deepest chagrin, he bids us “Bon soir” in the softest tones, and takes his departure.

Bewildered, we turn for explanation. This is soon forthcoming.

“If you respect yourself, sir,” says the lady at the bar, in the sternest English, “you won’t be seen speaking to *that* man.”

“Who are you ?” we then ask, more astonished than ever,

and hearing the tongue wherein we were born, "and why did you speak to him roughly like that?"

"I'm from Sydney, sir, I'd have you to know, and the man's a *libéré*; he's no right in this house."

"Indeed!" we answer; "but he is decent enough, and I have but myself lately come from Australia."

"That may be, sir, but it's time you learnt we have but two classes in Nouméa, the convict and the free; so take my advice, and mind what you're doing."

We did mind—and away to bed, thinking out problems of life, and of the pitiless curse on him, our friend, who vainly was trying to lead a new life.

Yet one other instance—at another hotel, for we had changed quarters to a spot closer to the new Observatory.

The heart of the landlord was one day gladdened by the arrival of another guest, closely shaven and buttoned. Him we judged to be a Jesuit Father from Madagascar.

To this person had been assigned a seat at *table d'hôte* next to us, and all had looked up to him as a most desirable addition to our little circle. A *surveillant* in plain clothes who sat opposite, and whose duty it is to know everybody, had been especially affable and courteous to the stranger.

The new-comer appeared the essence of gentility, and cordially was the cognac passed round after the *recherché dîner*, which all enjoyed after the labours of the day.

One evening, on return from vespers at the fine cathedral, our astonishment is great on finding that not only is the seat at the table vacant on the right, where usually sat the supposed priest who so blandly had passed the wine, *les petits pois*, *radis*, and other delicacies, but that the *surveillant* has also disappeared, and that the whole place is in an uproar.

Judge of our amazement when the energetic little landlord comes bustling in, with many a *sacré*, and declares in half

French, half English, so great is his excitement, that our friend the priest is a *libéré* in disguise, that he has promptly expelled him, that the *surveillant* (one of his best customers) vows he will never show his face again at that table, and that he himself had better close his hotel at once and seek "fresh fields and pastures new," since the place will henceforth be ruined.

Now, we ask any man of sense, Is this treatment just to one who has paid the awful penalty of a New Caledonian prison, and is doing his level best to reform? The *libéré* is not, usually, a convict of the worst class. Far from it. Then, why hound these men down like curs? Why not assist them in their sincere efforts to rise at least by keeping silence, so helping them in a measure to forget the past?

'Tis surely time that a more humane and truer philosophy asserted itself; time—high time—to adopt a more scientific course of treatment towards discharged prisoners. Why not send them to another country, away from the atmosphere of "La Nouvelle," where in new and suitable environment they can start new lives? For long has been tried the *régime* of hate, the rule of damnation—why not now the gospel of Love? Such would accord with the teachings of the Christ whom men profess; and no true man, French or otherwise, can condemn these sentiments.

We are fully aware that there is a class of convicts, especially in the worst camps, which includes those sunk in depths of crime too terrible to dwell upon; and to let such loose upon society without undergoing proper treatment would be sheer madness. Of these we shall speak later, when describing our visit to the prisons, the gruesome guillotine, and the yawning graves; but even *they* have sprung from men, and have sparks of the Infinite in them. Thus we maintain that if the crimes of such desperadoes are henceforth regarded as

the effects of disease which psychological science essays to cure by a proper course in hospital, wherein the good that is left will be cultivated rather than squashed by the fearful grip of prison life as it is, it will be an evolutionary step towards that higher social state which every convict has a right to strive for, having once paid the reasonable penalty of his misdeeds.

## CHAPTER III

Nouméa to the Convict Camp at Bourail—*Le vapeur "Marie"*—Scenes *en route*—A Romance of Physical Geography—Solomon Islanders—Soup with a Fork—Dreary Teremba—The Irony of Christmas—The Village of Moindou—A Garden of the Tropics—A Grand Old Man—The *Libérés*' "Concession"—Crossing the Styx—Arrival at the "City of Tears"—*Les Indigènes*—Away to the Prisons.

HAVING established the Observatory in Nouméa, and left all in good order, we take our departure on Christmas morning for another part of New Caledonia, intending to return to the capital later.

We intend, in fact, to see the great convict camp at Bourail before visiting the main prison at Ile Nou. At Bourail are some of the most terrible of the solitary cells; and that, too, is the place where *condamnés* of the better class are allowed to choose themselves wives from among the female prisoners. These latter also we are determined to see.

Christmas Day, indeed! 'Tis hard to realize that fact. People are astir as usual at daybreak, all hurrying to market. The warehouses and stores soon open, and business is brisk by 7 a.m., as we step on board the *Marie*, a miserable little coasting steamer bound for Teremba, a place some forty-five miles north from Nouméa on the western littoral, where we must needs disembark for our destination.

Burnett, an English friend, had agreed to accompany us; and an agreeable companion he soon proves himself.

The course northward is between the convict islet, Ile

Nou, and the main island; and forbidding enough do the great white walls of the prison appear, hideously massive in construction, but relieved by the red-tiled roofs and a few cocoa palms, which, waving in the breeze, seem to speak of victory and hope even for the wretched inmates.

At some little distance stands the *Leproserie*, where those affected with the most loathsome diseases are confined; and a solitary spot it is, with the bare gloom of its walls relieved by one or two paw-paw trees.

On the opposite side of the channel is the political prisoners' settlement, a place comfortable enough to all appearances, and once honoured by the presence of Henri Rochfort. After the Commune in 1872, many who were sentenced at Versailles for political offences were transported hither.

The coast-line as we proceed northwards remains essentially the same in character. Great rounded and ribbed spurs and saddles sweep down towards the water's edge, telling of the denuding action of the sun's heat, wind and rain, during æons of time past, while in the background rise the main mountains. Great quartz veins and fissures in the brown coast rock indicate hydrothermal action in those earlier days when the cooling earth crumpled and twisted out the hills and valleys in contracting throes of convulsion.

In the Uitoe Pass, through which we go, the scenery is lovely; native pines and mangroves intermingle, skirting the beach as a foreground to the hills and a fringe to the blue water. Quaintly shaped islets, all undermined by the action of the waves, give a further practical lesson in the operations of geology.

We drop anchor for a few minutes near the pretty residence of M. Dezarnauld, a gentleman who distinguished himself on the Victorian diggings; and here go ashore his lady and charming daughter, who seem glad to return to



their comfortable bungalow yonder, all embowered in the dense foliage of the mango and quivering palm trees.

Several Solomon Islanders, bound for one of the plantations of the north, are in the steerage of the *Marie*. Each has a disc engraved with a number, and attached to his necklet, and besides these ornaments they wear in their earlobes exquisitely carved pieces of bamboo, in which they stow tobacco, rejoicing greatly in these artistic decorations. Seeing us at breakfast by the bridge, they also try *déjeuner à la fourchette*, and lamentably fail in the effort to take Christmas soup with a fork. Thereafter they dive all together into the pot, till one fellow, not satisfied, grabs what is left and makes a clean sweep of everything.

Several of the larger islands in the neighbourhood of the Uitoe Pass are used as sheep runs, as are parts of the mainland, but the occupation of the sheep-farmer is not a lucrative one. A kind of "spear-grass" infests the pastures, and the little spikelets assailing the nostrils cause much mortality among the sheep. Cattle-runs are far more successful.

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So is the greater part of Christmas Day spent on board the *Marie*, with no sign of the festive season save drinking the captain's health in *vin ordinaire*; and by seven o'clock in the evening we enter La Foa river and reach Teremba.

Shall we ever forget this place, and the night of our visit? Christmas, forsooth! We think of the carols and the snow of beloved England. The moon shines fitfully on an ugly greenish sky beyond yon clump of cocoanuts as we pull ashore and make for the hotel, escorted by a perfect phalanx of mosquitoes more bloodthirsty by far than Queensland's worst. Two dead trees adorn the gate of the hostelry; and, after entering, a tea-cupful of water is presented, wherewith we are supposed to wash after the horrors of that dirty little steamer.

As *dîner* will not be ready for a while longer, with Burnett we proceed to examine our whereabouts, and to cruise in the moonlight about this dreary, quaint-looking place. Teremba was strongly fortified after the great native insurrection against the French in the "seventies"; but the old stone fort and repulsive-looking barracks, so grim and grotesque, and smelling so damp and fusty, are now utterly deserted, save for you convict, who has been told off as a watchman, and who, strolling around with his rusty old key, makes the place look more desolate still on this Christmas night of joy and gladness.

Willingly we return to the little inn, and the sense of utter desolation, combined with the thought of absent friends, is too much. Good cheer we must have, and will have if it can be got. The very dogs bark and snarl as we approach, and we have to conciliate them ere we can enter that bamboo hut with its thatched roof. There by the aid of a dingy oil lamp we pledge each other in bumpers of such nectar as madame of the hostelry can offer.

But the dinner following is a brighter affair. *Monsieur le Capitaine*, with others of the ship's company, is present, and together with "Madame," who proves very affable, does his utmost to throw a little life into the dismal surroundings; but *La fête de Noël* is not referred to, and *vin ordinaire* makes but poor punch.

Feeling time hang heavily, we determine to quit; and so hasten onwards in a tiny buggy towards the village of Moindou, where we must pass the night.

The country as we drive along is monotonous in the extreme, for we are traversing a patch of strata unfavourable for the growth of luxuriant tropical vegetation.

The *naouilli*, or ti tree, here reigns supreme, and the white pithy nature of the trunks calls vividly to mind the Australian bush. About 10.30 p.m. we reach Moindou, and

put up at the comfortable little inn owned by one Forrest, an Englishman, and a landlord of the genial type, with whom we crack glasses ere turning in. The rooms are comfortable enough—plaster walls ceiled with canvas, and roofed with corrugated iron. But many of the houses have been thatched by native labour, and form characteristic monuments of a New Caledonian village.

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The following day, December 26th, has a plethora of memories, and many pages of our journal are devoted to its records. First, a lovely swim in the Moindou river—sheltered from the public gaze, save the eye of a washer-girl, who beats her clothes yonder on the stones, quite unconcerned, by great flowering trees, rank lantana and *sida retusa*; while cattle-bells cheerily clangle on the still morning air, and the more solemn tones of the chapel bell are calling the devout to mass.

A pause to examine the curious quartzite rocks, partly metamorphosed in the dim past by the earth's internal fires, and then away to see the wonderful gardens of M. Boyer, a celebrated coffee-planter of great repute, distant from Moindou but a few kilomètres.

The soil soon changes, and instead of the monotonous *naouilli* country, with the trees so gaunt and gnarled, we are now amid luxuriant tropical vegetation on a lane leading to M. Boyer's residence. Banked on either side are guava and orange trees, which almost run wild, and these are jammed tightly among one tangle of bananas, blue duranta, white oleander, roses, reeds, and aloes, all mixed up with long grass and *sida retusa*, so lavish is the growth, so bountiful is Nature at this place; while here and there tower high aloft the graceful palms laden with cocoanuts.

And yet, despite this labyrinth of vegetation, so wonderfully

fertile is the soil that all seem to thrive in the fight for existence. Beautiful hills, covered with tier upon tier of tropical foliage, relieved by the delicate green of the *banquier* or candle-nut tree, embrace the wondrous panorama of plant life. All around, too, are giant arums, red-fruited chillies, geraniums, and other flowers, ancient cycads, great ferns, maize, pineapples, paw-paws, and wild coffee, in one incongruous mass, rearing their leaves aloft towards the light of heaven; while butterflies and swallows flitter about in the enjoyment of bliss.

What a revelation! One asks, indeed, how can all these things live? And the answer comes and again re-echoes: The generous soil is the gentle mother of all this marvellous growth; year after year, through long, long ages past, have fertilizing ingredients and alluvial matter accumulated in this basin of country formed originally from some blow-hole or internal convulsion in the younger days of our planet's history.

The great charm of travel lies in contrast. Shutting the eyes and thinking of Teremba, so dreary and dull, we open them and again behold. The "Garden of Eden" lies here before us; and there comes that grand old Adam, the veteran Boyer, who, drawing nigh to his fourscore years, steps lightly as he cries a cheery *bon jour* and glows all over in the ruddiest health.

No serpent beguiles this favoured spot. Madame repeats her husband's greetings, and seeks for good things for the inner man; while sons and daughters, like the seed of Abraham, take up the strain of joyous welcome.

Meantime, in company with our splendid old host, we inspect his coffee, those wonderful plantations, and marvel at all "La Nouvelle" can produce.

What if the island were annexed to Australia, if by some chance we exchanged the Falklands!

The wealth of produce is truly amazing, not less than the

wonder of close planting. Oranges and bananas grow side by side, with foliage mingling freely; yet each fruit thrives, despite the dense undergrowth of the *sida retusa* which Boyer lets grow and never troubles about.

The garden, he tells us, is entirely self-supporting, and that is the marvellous part of it. The family has but to buy a little wine, and meat is a luxury that they neither need nor covet.

The veteran declares that not a foot of that land has been trenched or even ploughed; the trees were planted without any preparation, and, turning to us, says with pride and affection, "Voilà! see how they have grown."

The soil has a depth of eighteen feet. Coffee and mangoes are the staple productions, and the former is always grown under the shadow and overhanging branches of larger trees. For instance, mangoes, laden and borne down with the weight of fruit, are but four paces apart, and two coffee trees grow vigorously between them.

Acres of coffee have been planted between and under large shading acacia trees, arranged in long rows, the coffee bush at each end being but three feet from the acacia's trunk. So successful has this mode of coffee growing proved that the owner raised eighty kilos a day; and almost as he speaks a file of Kanakas comes trooping along, bearing bags heavy with the berry, for Boyer is wise and employs black labour. The laws of latitude to him are the laws of God. Even the banana is used for shade purposes, the coffee growing within two feet from its juicy stem, each simultaneously bearing fruit.

But the coffee trees themselves are six feet apart, this distance ensuring the requisite shade from the spreading leaves of the protecting acacias, while pine-apples fill the interspaces and grow almost alongside. Well do we exclaim: "What a wondrous soil—how fertile is Caledonia of the Southern Seas!"

And what lessons in agriculture! The land was selected but sixteen years past, and maize yielded means which afforded coffee planting. Why! all the coffee for Australia could be raised in "La Nouvelle," so great is the yield.

So do we wander through these vistas of Eden. See! there is a banana laden with bunches, but six feet from a cocoa palm heavy with the nuts, and yonder a tall paw-paw, weighted with fruit, and *ten inches* from another banana tree equally fruitful.

And thus it is wherever we go in this astonishing place—palms, bananas, pine-apple, paw-paws, coffee, and oranges—all jammed together in the race for life, and each bearing fruit after its kind more than the *vieillard* can possibly use.

Next we arrive at his son's house in another part of the garden, and distant from the father's about a mile. To reach it we have passed an arrowroot plantation, and the recesses of a gully heavily timbered with great fig-like trees, clustered with the bird's-nest fern and entwined by giant creepers.

The surroundings of the son's place are lovelier than the father's. There are the distant hills, against which, as a foreground, rise the glorious palms with their great clusters of nuts; while now and again the exquisite tracery of a leaf towers higher than the rest, quivering in the air against the clear blue sky. The son has his fiddle for times of leisure, and wants no more save a little wife, who would add great joy to that place of peace. Ah, woman, woman, God's first gift, man at best is a sorry creature without thee! Absinthe and cognac are nowhere.

We toast each other merrily in cocoanut milk, and then once more to the paternal roof.

A *libéré* holds the horses as we say good-bye. He has reached the second division of convicts, and has thus become qualified for domestic service.

So off we go, bound to Bourail and the prisons, and anticipate scenes different enough to those just left.

At eight kilomètres we call a halt, and visit the coffee gardens of MM. Robbillard. Here is again the same plan of cultivation—long lines of coffee right under the shade trees—but the distances apart are somewhat greater, the latter being



A CONCESSIONNAIRE'S GARDEN.

[Peace, photo., Nouméa.]

twenty feet, and the coffee in rows six feet by nine. The soil is shallower and not so rich, and judicious husbandry gives the natural compensation.

\* \* \* \* \*

We hastily push on, and enter another area of *naouilli* country, where there has been a bush fire; and the charred remains and white trunks of the trees look the very counterpart of similar scenes in Australia.

In an hour again the soil is different, and the picture changes as we reach a fertile valley. There among clumps of cocoanuts are the gardens and plantations of the *cessionnaires*, those freed convicts who are at liberty in New Caledonia by the force of good conduct, but who can never return to France. The extent of their grants may equal eight acres. Well! *theirs* is not such a very hard lot, one thinks, as we drive through the luxuriant maize fields and manioc plantations; our sympathies are greater for the *libérés* in the towns and the prisoners in the cells.

The *cessionnaire* has certainly a better time. The Government supplies him with tools and seeds, and four hundred francs besides, when he has built a house and proved an honest purpose.

Yes! there stands the *libéré's* neat thatched dwelling, surrounded by his crops and flooded by the sunlight of as genial and healthy a climate as any in the world. In fact, everything in these Arcadian woods seems to speak of happiness and peace, with nothing to remind the convict of the past save the regulation blouse and plain straw hat.

That very team which we pass, with the bullock bells clanging and clinking their wild tones of bush melody, tells of things different enough to the ugly music of prison chains. The bullocks are tightly yoked up with great beams over their necks, very different to the Australian fashion, thus rendering it impossible for one beast to move the neck or head without a similar movement being communicated to the other.

And now we cannot but think of the braes of Scotland, anon of the glorious tropics, and again of the Australian scrub. New Caledonian scenes eminently partake of all three, at times distinct each for each; then, as the angles of vision change, all seem to blend and form such a picture as only "La Nouvelle" can produce.



The more we see of the island, the stronger does this impression of the blending of countries become. The brown hills and upper reaches of the craggy main range are peculiarly Highland in character, so are the shanties of the *libérés*, reminding one of the crofters of Argyle; the palms and bananas of the fertile pockets or valleys savour as strongly of Ceylon; and that bush fire over yonder in the *naouilli* country is strikingly Australian in type.

The greater our experience of New Caledonia, the more does one regret that our friends the French have made it a convict *dépôt*—the more do we wish it was British. They freely admit that they have not the peculiar colonizing instincts of the Anglo-Saxon, and it is impossible to resist the impression that naturally the island is an adjunct of Australia, which, if subject to the factors of energy and dogged pluck which operate in our Colonies, would prove the brightest jewel in Southern Waters, and a grand sanatorium too. An influx of free settlers is most desirable to develop the enormous mineral and other resources of the country; but, so long as the convict element is there, such people will not come; they refuse to live where “crime is in the air.”

\* \* \* \* \*

So on, bound to the “City and Camp of Tears!”

For a few moments we rest by a shady streamlet amid bowers of tropic beauty, anon reach a spur, and see Bourail away below, nestling in a valley of great fertility. Hastening on past great hedges of lantana, and jolting over the miserable little bridges that span the creeklets, we reach the “*débit-bar*,” or wayside inn.

Again *en route*, passing acres of coffee gardens, then a drover with a mob of fine cattle; and cheered by the merry twitter of the birds, chirping like the English chaffinch, we at length approach Bourail, the great penal town of the north,

crossing the river which has proved such an awful Styx to wretched fellow-beings.

An Algerian Arab, in his flowing dirty white robes, reminds one of Charon. Politely we salute him in Arabic, and wonder for what political offence he was transported.

In front are great *magasins* and buildings of the *gendarmerie*, and yonder the women's prison and hospital, all enclosed by great ugly walls of massive concrete, and of which more later.

Marvellous indeed is the way in which the cocoanut flourishes by the roadside. Those parts of the streets which are not as yet lined by houses, are overshadowed by the palms growing out from the banks through which the thoroughfares are cut—right from amongst great thickets of lantana blooming heavily in every tint of the verbenas.

At last the hotel! We deposit the baggage in charge of a *libérée* woman, a very virago. Then a delightful swim in the river, followed by an excellent *dîner* provided by the *Monsieur et Madame* of the *Estaminet*, who, true to the innate politeness of their kindly race, do their very utmost to minister to our wants.

Next day, December 27, the twittering of birds and chirruping of insect life wake us from slumber and dreams of England soon after four o'clock. The temperature is perfect, a cool stratum of air covers the valley, while a great zone of cloud-fog belts the dark mountains which tower up in black outline against the daylight sky.

And there is Venus in all her glory, gently ushering in the morn. What a peaceful hour! It might be some Utopia, and yet what scenes of misery are we soon to witness in those dreadful prisons beyond that avenue of blood-red *flamboyantes*, those *poinciana* trees, yonder. Over the thatched roofs of the concrete houses go merrily hopping Molucca thrushes—pretty

birds with brown bodies, black heads, and yellow beaks, specially introduced to eat up the locusts, which at times bid fair to torment Bourail as they once plagued the land of Egypt.

The neighbouring blacksmith rings out his merry tones as we take an early stroll, preliminary to interviewing the Commandant of the Prisons, from whom we must obtain authority to see the cells.

Close handy is the granadilla vine in great luxuriance; but the ordinary passion fruit does not bear so heavily, nor thrive so well, as in South Eastern Queensland.

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See! There goes a band of New Caledonian natives trooping into the town from some distant camp, and we hasten to make their acquaintance for ethnological study. Two of the men are chatting together, and them we examine first to their great amazement. One is named Parerouse, after some native bird with a red head, and a stalwart specimen he is, with his blue and checkered *sulu* wound around his waist and dangling down in front below the groin in most ludicrous twists and folds, as is the custom.

We carefully note these peculiarities of dress, which below the pelvis are laughable enough, and sketch him and his quaint appendages under the lee of an acacia tree. His massive head is bound round turban fashion by a piece of Turkey red cloth; but the crown is unprotected, save for the great mat of black woolly hair, which is itself ample protection from the rays of a vertical sun. He gives us a look for a few sous, and we also secure his *cardu*, or bamboo comb, which serves to adorn him. To complete the description: the eyes are very dark brown, the skin a deep copper-bronze hue, the nose flat and well developed, and the lips moderately thick. Overhauling him further, to his great surprise, we

cannot find any tattooing or skin cuts similar to those with which the Queensland natives bedeck themselves.

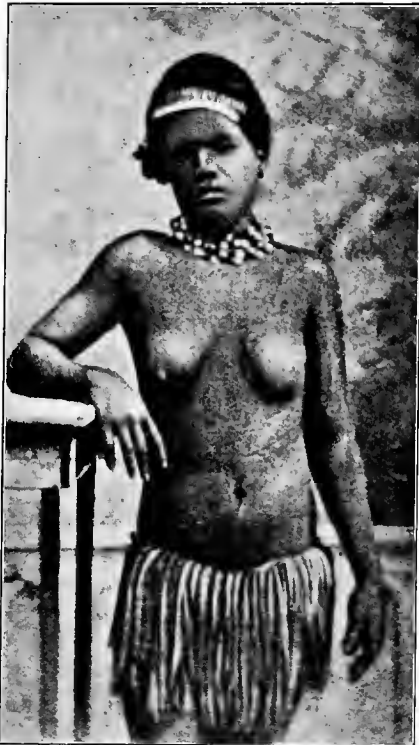
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Parerouse says that the name of his comrade is "Bwar-du-

Bar," and adds that one "Throu-pae-Nu" is a great man among them, and "Car-te-Raini" is another comrade. His lady friends, he tells us, are named "Marwee," "Mwar," "Oneree," and "Cama," but does not mention whether they are conjugally related.

"Bwar-du-Bar" rejoices in dark, crispy whiskers, beard, and moustache, and a big hole in the flange of his ear is regarded as a great mark of distinction.

And there come the *poppinées*, or native women, jogging along in a row down the road. In the distance they look like a file of emus, for at every step—bent



[Peace, photo.]

A BELLE OF NEW CALEDONIA—A TYPICAL  
POPPINÉE.

over as they are under heavy bundles of bark, palm-leaf baskets, and fruit which they carry for their lords—their comical waistbands of flax, old rags, or banana leaves delicately

fringed and split by the wind, jolt upwards, and jostle pertly aloft from the spring of the back, like the tail of the emu when that noble bird starts to shamle. One has an alpaca umbrella, another bears an entire banana leaf wherewith to fan herself,



A GREAT CHIEF OF "LA NOUVELLE."

while a third carries a jew's harp slung round the neck—an instrument of music they much appreciate.

We look at the women more carefully than at the men, and buy up their *sulus*, combs, and fish spears with great

alacrity. They had evidently plenty of girdles in reserve, for they would quietly sneak away, divest themselves of their fantastic aprons behind some lantana bush, and return, clad in others, with the original ones in hand for sale. These native daughters are very like the Australian "gin" in feature, but far surpass them in intellect. The complexions and eyes resemble those of the men, and the extraordinary growth of hair is just as matty and woolly. They tattoo themselves in plenty, having, like all members of the gentler sex, a great love of personal adornment, and ink devices are pricked down the length of the leg and across the cheeks. Some tattoo themselves with charcoal. They smoke tobacco freely, but opium is evidently unknown. Next we examine their bundles, and discover, carefully strapped up in great strips and lengths of *naouilli* bark, shell-fish (chiefly *cerithium*), crabs, and sundry bits and scraps that need not be detailed, including the jew's harp. All these natives are governed by a little chief who owns allegiance to the great "Nibrororo," king of the tribe of Ni, to which they all belong. The total number of natives in New Caledonia is about thirty thousand; mentally and physically they are far superior to the Australian aboriginals, and are a most independent race. There are several tribal kings.

But the scene soon changes, and an hour sees us in the dismal corridors of the convict prisons, interviewing the lifemen, and handling the heavy chains—an experience of a lifetime.

## CHAPTER IV

The Prisons at Bourail—The Commandant—The Chief *Surveillant*—Passing the Gate—The Great Black Bolt—"So Far and no Farther"—Abandon Hope—"Jusqu'au ciel"—The Life-men—"Allez à la Prison"—Alone in the Darkness—Utter Damnation—Solitary Confinement—A Touching Experience—"Ah! c'est terrible!"—The Women's Prisons—"The Paddock"—A Peep through the Keyhole—*La Mère Supérieure*—Choosing Wives—The Convict Taint—Novel Newspapers.

BEFORE we can get into the prisons, one must necessarily visit the Commandant and obtain a pass. We had hopes to meet him on his early morning ramble, after *café au lait* and a cigarette, but were disappointed. Now, therefore, we must go direct to his bungalow, which adjoins the penitentiary. So, hoping for a good reception, we proceed armed with credentials, and looking as *distingué* as possible on the best of horses mine host could provide. One beast, however, has the mange badly, and a sorry picture he looks, ambling along the great crimson avenue of *flamboyantes* which leads up to the house.

We alight before the broad steps, overhung on either side by the grotesque leaves of the *caryota* or sago palm, while yonder are the cocoa-nuts, with graceful fronds glistening in the sunlight, and quivering a gentle treble in the morning air.

The Commandant is in his bureau adjacent. Securely tying up our steeds, under the shade of a spreading *poinciana regia* tree, we repair to his presence. There, surrounded by papers and documents, prison regulations and all the formulæ of his dreadful business, is a man with hard, wiry-looking features,

French to a dot. His face is lit up, however, by a kindly expression as he bids us be seated. Thin grey hair, through which he appears to have been running his fingers in some fit of abstraction, caps a forehead determined indeed, but marked with lines of worry and a constant sense of cruel responsibility.

We tell of our scientific mission on behalf of Queensland to New Caledonia—how we came to establish a meteorological station for the study of the elements; and then, having carefully paved the way, beg that—being interested in all phases and conditions under which men exist—we may be allowed to see the prisons, and also the women's quarters, with a view to obtaining some insight into the French system of penitentiary discipline, and the means by which convict marriages are effected.

As we refer to the gentler sex, his countenance falls. "Ce n'est pas possible, monsieur," says he in blandest tones—"it cannot be." Only a dozen women are now awaiting release at the hands of the *libérés* who may select them for wives, and only two in the establishment are condemned to imprisonment perpetual. We do not press the point, but determine nevertheless later on to inspect at least the outside of the female quarters from yonder knoll, which commands a view of their prison quadrangle.

But we are readily granted leave to see *Le Camp*, as the general prison of the male convicts is called; and a stolid-faced *canaque*, or native of "La Nouvelle," with a bludgeon like a Phallos of ancient worship, is hastily summoned and told to lead the way to the bungalow of the chief *surveillant*.

This latter functionary, a dapper little Frenchman with silver epaulettes, instructed by a letter from the Commandant, receives us with much deference. Adjusting his smart uniform, and accompanied by a subordinate bearing those awful keys, he bids us follow, and with downcast hearts we reach the great



concrete walls, tipped with jagged bottle glass, which bind for earth-life the footsteps of fellow-beings. Bold indeed he who would essay to scale them! 'Tis hard to repress a shudder on passing that awful gate, on hearing the great bolt shoot back into its socket behind us.

Once in the gaols, all trace may be lost by the friends of a prisoner. We find ourselves on the slope of a hill commanding the beautiful tropic country beneath, but yet in a large prison square formed by the hideous great walls around, which speakingly say: "So far shall thy feet move, and no farther."

Within this enclosure, so gruesome and forbidding, are the old and new prison buildings. The former, roofed with thatch, are at length falling to ruin after long periods of storm and tropical rains. The massive structures of the latter are of concrete and stone. Here and there, hard by within the prison square, are tiny patches of cultivation. On such those convicts who are not in solitary confinement, and who have behaved themselves, are allowed, after the daily course of prison discipline, to cultivate a few pumpkins for their bodies' health. What about their souls! How spirits must yearn to flit and be free!

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"And are there really life-men in this place?" we ask the *surveillant*, reflecting that even for those not actually in the black cells there is yet the blue sky, still the all-pervading air of heaven—yes! and eyes are left them wherewith to feast caged souls on the beautiful maize fields and bauana groves which nestle in yon valley far beyond the grim walls of the camp, tropic pastures which *they* can never till.

"Mais oui, monsieur," replies our gaunt conductor, with just one look of commiseration on his determined brow—"jusqu'au ciel," as he waves the hand dramatically to the clear blue canopy above.

“Merciful God! Jusqu’au ciel!” ’Tis equally the expression and the manner thereof with that appealing gesture towards the Infinite that so touches the heart. Abandon hope, all hope on earth *vous pauvres condamnés*, ye whom tender mothers once nursed at the breast and called *mon chéri*, ye whom some untoward evolution forced into crime, ye whose environment fosters the criminal microbe, who have no chance and never can have to redeem the past. Look to yon sky, to life on a happier planet.

We ask to see them, begging that those “lifers” may be marshalled before us. We want to study character, to mark how that fearful place has carved the wrinkles. The *surveillant*, with a flourish of his cane so natty and spruce, politely agrees, and leads the way to the new building, and so into a long corridor.

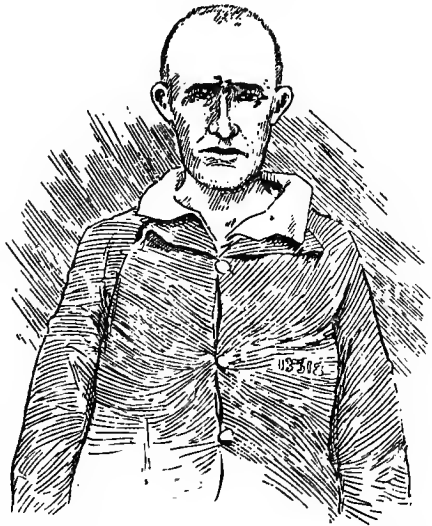
We are face to face with the wretched men, some are here *pour la vie*, and others for various terms of servitude—five to eight years and upwards. Evidently ’tis spell time, for the inmates—in brown blouses and pants, others clad only in rude shirts, and some again naked to the waist—are lounging on hammocks slung in rows along the entire length of that dismal aisle.

Immediately all is bustle, the convicts having instantly to stand to attention as the officer enters. No time now to don shirts. Some strive to struggle into them with all possible speed, and are severely reprimanded for not putting them on fast enough in the presence of visitors. The same haggard, pinched, awry look hangs over the shaven face of one and all of that condemned crew, and striking indeed is the resemblance between them.

True to his promise, the *surveillant* calls the “life-men,” and bids them fall into line outside the corridor for our inspection. Forgetting for the nonce the nature of their offences,

he questions each severely as to his crime, carefully noting the replies on his tablets. The first answers, "For shooting my mistress!" "Et vous?" addressing another. "For robbery with violence," says he. "And you?" pointing the finger to a third, a miserable-looking, shrivelled-up *vieillard* nearing his allotted span. "Pour viol de la fille," is the answer. Another says that his life's crime was the same as that of the first man; while the fifth announces, with a great touch of bounce, that his sentence was only for wilful murder.

The latter fellow seems the only really hardened villain of the lot, repeating the nature of his crime with a sickening gusto as he looks with bitter hate and defiance at that smart-looking officer of the law. All the others appear utterly dejected and heart-broken, living but yet dead, hoping in very hope gone for that rest that should lead *not* to hell fire, but to eternal PROGRESS.



[Peace, photo., Nouméa.

A TYPICAL NEW CALEDONIAN CONVICT.

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With heavy hearts we leave them and follow our leader to the solitary cells. On our way we espy a man reading under the lee of that trail of pumpkins yonder. He has smuggled some book, and is trying for the moment to forget

his sorrow. The eagle eye of the officer at once detects him; he has no business to be there; he has no right with that volume. Evidently it was the New Testament.

“Pourquoi?” demands the *surveillant* in his severest tones. No answer.

“Eh bien, venez ici.”

As there is still delay, the officer's brow contracts; and, stamping his foot as only an excited Frenchman can, he bids him in fierce tones, “Allez à la prison.”\* Repeating and desperately emphasising his command, “À la prison, à la prison” rings in the ears, and in ours to this day.

The wretched man now perforce approaches in a dogged, yet half-imploring manner, but his steps quickly accelerate as our guide thunders for his *canaque*, a hard-faced Caledonian native, who specially delights to exert his savage authority, and wield his great phallic club over those condemned.

Running up with malicious glee sparkling in his forbidding-looking eyes, the *indigène* brandishes his ugly weapon, and the convict, now seeing that the game is up, marches in front of us to that terrible place, the recollection of which will for ever remain stamped in the letter-book of the brain. The door is gained, the great black bolt withdrawn, the convict forced in with a savage push, and we are standing—the *surveillant*, ourselves, the *canaque*, and his victim—in another corridor into which scarce a gleam of blessed sunlight can enter. A feeling of misgiving and nervous dread comes over us as the *canaque*, showing his great knotted bludgeon, helps the poor devil to undress. His blouse is overhauled, pockets turned inside out, but nothing is found save that luckless Testament, which is immediately confiscated.

And now to the punishment. “For what?” you ask. Well, a punishment which shall justly meet the case of this most

\* Meaning the solitary cells.

heinous breach of discipline. As our eyes get accustomed to that dreadful darkness, we perceive that throughout the corridor is a sloping structure of bare planks, slanting at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and a broad ledge running along the bottom with sundry heavy chains dangling from great iron bolts attached thereto.



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

THE PRISON CANAQUE, NEW CALEDONIA, OUTSIDE THE WALLS.

Politely turning, and with a cynical smile, the *surveillant* invites us to feel the weight of one of those chains; and exhibits satisfaction, as, with an effort, one just manages to lift it.

Now an inkling of what is coming.

The swarthy *canaque* fetches a sledge-hammer, makes the victim sit down on the planks, and further commands him to apply those odious fetters to his legs, which he does with much

deliberation, forming a picture in which resignation and despair are aptly portrayed. A few strokes of the huge hammer—clang! clang! clang!—and the big iron pin locks the chains and ankles, and the man reclines with such ease as he may on that bed of adamant. A morsel of comfort only, and that is the ledge aforesaid, which catching, as it were, the heels, prevents that poor specimen of blasted humanity from sliding down and the chains from bruising the flesh. Not a bite of meat, not one drop of water are given him; and there and thuswise is he left for some long days—at the will of his tormentors—to ruminate, yes, and haply digest what little he may have gathered from that book of Christian love.

With a bang the heavy door shuts out the light of God, the great bar is shot into its sockets and fastened securely by a hideous black padlock. We came, we have seen, and—well, we feel sick! Give us, O Lord, the light of Thy sky.

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But on we go, there's more to be seen, and we follow the *surveillant*, after whom comes the *canaque*, for justice—save the word—has to be meted out in another case, and we must see what follows.

Thus we repair to the *cellules* for solitary confinement, those tiny, dingy prisons where punishment is even more severe, each built specially for the accommodation of one man.

Accommodation, forsooth! Why, he has barely room to stretch himself!

The cells are arranged in rows on either side of a long, narrow corridor; and the lines of further black bolts and huge padlocks are enough to unnerve the stoutest heart.

This forbidding aisle is thoroughly characteristic of a New Caledonian penal establishment.

For our special benefit, *Monsieur le Surveillant* opens one which may be taken as a type of the lot.

A miserable wizen-faced specimen of humanity, dragging out an awful existence in that cell of terrible silence, is seen lying on plain sloping boards, about three feet wide and six feet long, with a ledge at foot to "stay" the heels. The whole apartment cannot be more than eight feet long, six feet broad,



[Kerry and Co., photo., Sydney.]

SOLITARY-CONFINEMENT CELLS.

and ten feet high. Necessary sanitary conveniences of the rudest possible description are jammed into the corners; and above is a narrow slit, barely sufficient for ventilation, and enabling the ill-starred being to get just one glimpse of the bright blue of heaven.

For three awful months has he to occupy this depth of hell, for some breach of rules of the nature of which we remain ignorant. Opportunity is taken of our visit to search him.

Now, readers, stand by and picture minutely what takes place. The convict comes forth into the corridor, blank despair cut deeply on his countenance, and listlessly waits while the grim-faced *canaque* savagely proceeds to overhaul him. "Ouvrez la bouche immédiatement," says the *surveillant*. So is his mouth searched, lest any "quid" of tobacco should be lurking in the recesses of the cheeks—even his very armpits, but still no tobacco. Next, the convict is stripped, and as the process proceeds—oh horror!—out from the depths of his dirty blouse flutters a young English sparrow, barely fledged, chirping plaintively and fluttering its wings as it reaches the ground. Yes, the sparrow has found its way to "La Nouvelle." The wretched fellow must have enticed that emblem of innocence through the slit in the wall, and has been nursing it as tenderly in his bosom as a mother her first-born.

Poor beggar, poor devil! one's very soul bleeds for you, and trembles for that bird.

"Pourquoi ce oiseau, vous incorrigible?"

True enough, his only comfort, his main solace, his beloved companion, is doomed to die! In an instant the *surveillant*, looking as if all the terrors of the damned were let loose, dashes the fledgeling to the pavement. One gasp, all is over, and the most touching experience of our whole life is chronicled, as, while the *condamné* is mercilessly reprimanded, we take the body and remove the tiny wings as a souvenir.

Utterly crestfallen now that his one friend is no more, and with a look that would have moved a heart of iron, the *condamné* stands and awaits the next move. The *canaque* is now made to examine the dungeon; but quick as he is, the nigger is not smart enough for the *surveillant*, who hits him angrily on the shoulder for finding nothing, himself enters, and proceeds to search. The excited officer, rattling about with



his cane, examines every nook and corner of that cursed cell, the convict eyeing him suspiciously the while.

At last are found two morsels of tobacco; they are eagerly seized and the man confronted. Goodness alone knows how those items of luxury got there! The man vouchsafes not a word in reply, so the *canaque*, anxious to regain the approbation of the officer, gives him a brutal shove, and locks him up once more to be alone in that hole of affliction.

Ere the massive bolt is shot into its place we hear a knock from within a cell opposite. "Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça, vous desirez quelques choses?" demands the *surveillant*. The door is opened for a moment, and discloses another miserable occupant, who in most piteous tones, and giving way to tears, implores the officer to allow him a blanket or some stuff to keep off the mosquitoes, explaining that without sufficient covering they render existence insupportable.

"Oh! monsieur, merci. Grand Dieu! merci; les moustiques, les moustiques, je voudrais une couverture—a sheet to cover me—ah! c'est terrible," is his pitiable cry.

But to all his entreaties the *surveillant* turns a deaf ear, merely remarking that the mosquitoes must bite and that he must bear his punishment.

So we leave at last these painful scenes, and re-enter the quadrangle on our way to the kitchens, which we are invited to inspect. No special description of these is necessary. Everything in this department of the camp seems highly creditable to the passing visitor, and the ordinary prison fare plentiful and good enough of its kind.

An Englishman, who had brought himself within the grip of the French law, is attached to the culinary section; but although we press him we cannot discover anything of his antecedents beyond the fact that he was born in Manchester; and the nature of the offence is not clear. In the presence

of the officer we wish him a happier future, but are informed that he is a great liar and utterly unworthy of attention. Even to him, however, it is a pleasure to speak in our common tongue, and heartily do we bid him "good-bye."

We now say adieu to our *gendarme* friend, whom, while regretting his cruel severity, we cordially thank for the great courtesy displayed, and mounting horses again, turn our backs upon that camp of misery, and ride to the Bourail Hotel along a road banked on either side by the cocoa palms, and red and white oleanders in fullest bloom.

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Readers may be sure that, after the horrible associations of the prisons, *déjeuner* at our comfortable hotel, and the sundry pleasantries of the cordial host and his lady formed very agreeable experiences, and did much to lift the gloom filling our souls as we wondered how the poor wretch whom we saw so cruelly shackled was shaping to his punishment; he would be turning now on one side, anon on the other, in the vain endeavour to give even temporary ease. Ah, well! such is an experience of human life.

The Commandant of the gaols, to whom we have already introduced the reader, makes the most of it, at any rate. That hostelry with its pleasant verandah forms his snug paradise, and thither he soon comes, and, seating himself at a little table with another officer of distinction, is quickly involved in cards and the depths of that mysterious-looking bottle near his elbow, utterly oblivious during the happy moments of his siesta-hour alike of his responsibilities and the sufferings of his *condamnés*.

But come along! we must hurry up; we have no time to be idling here. Let us away, then! to examine at least the exterior of the women's quarters at the convent prison; let us to "The Paddock" (its English equivalent); and if haply we

cannot get inside—well! we will see something somehow. You, reader, come with us. Our course soon turns off from the main street, and so up a narrow lane almost arched over by *lantana*.

And now we come to the great walls, heavily capped with broken glass, and overhauling a *surveillant*, address him. He fears we cannot gain admission, but kindly offers to intercede for us with the Mother Superior who has charge of this penitentiary, and leaves us for a moment with that intention.

We are now standing by a grim-looking door in the prison wall, decorated with a great iron knocker, and notice a certain keyhole that will at least befriend one. We do not mean to be entirely thwarted, even should the Mother refuse, and apply the eye to the aperture.

We see, as in the men's quarters, a large quadrangle, and at the far end of the yard a pretty little woman with raven locks and pleasing face. By some strange psychic force that one cannot fathom, she comes running up as if knowing that some sympathetic spirit is observing her, makes straight for the door, and actually for that very keyhole. Now, a game at peep-show in such a place is a rather awkward experiment, so, deeming discretion the better part of valour, as the luckless girl positively returned our look with a wild glance in her brown eye, we retire from the door; just in time too, for *La Mère Supérieure*, dressed like a nun and in the garb of her order, arrives straight upon the scene.

This excellent lady, who evidently lives on the best that "La Nouvelle" can produce, and whose proportions remind us of "fat pullets and clotted cream," is exceedingly courteous; and, in response to our entreaties for admission, apologetically submits that she has not received the Commandant's permission. We softly remonstrate and exhibit cards and papers, preferring as a special reason the *bonâ fide* desire to

see something of the admirable manner in which she manages the incorrigibles of the gentler sex.

The kind face of the Mother becomes now kinder still—she at least follows Christ—and at length she yields and conducts us within those forbidden precincts, suggesting at the same time that we are highly privileged. We admit this most readily, and humbly follow our revered leader.

In this convent camp the prison buildings are near the boundary walls, as there is little or no danger of the inmates being able to scale them. Thus the great square is thoroughly open for purposes of exercise, clothes drying, and such like.

The women are now marshalled in a row for our inspection, much in the same manner as when *libérés* come hither to choose their wives. We scrutinize them closely, and although none are prepossessing, save her with the tresses who had returned our stolen glance at the keyhole, it is clear that some superior softening influence pervades the place, very different to the aura in the men's prison.

None appear to wear looks so awfully hard cut and chiseled with despair as those of the unhappy fellows we interviewed in the morning. A semi-contented, if not cheerful, expression is noted on the faces of many; and it is not difficult to see that the angel of mercy is the good Mother our guide, whom they evidently regard as the gentle emissary of the Saviour.

Does any one want proof of the peculiar softening influence of a true woman—a woman free from that damning cant which, like some terrible curse, poisons the minds of so many; a woman who is truly religious in her respectful sympathy and love for the unfortunates under her charge? Well, then, go to the female prisons at Bourail, and there you will probably find that which is sought. The Mother conducts us through the dormitories, some of which are being repaired, and further evidence is forthcoming of her tender solicitude for the fallen.

From behind the luxury of yon mosquito-net a fair young face takes stock of us. There is a lot of woollen stuffing from those mattresses which are to be re-covered. Mattresses and mosquito-nets! No hideous chains, no beds of bare planks are to be seen anywhere in *that* prison. Cells one cannot see; and if such exist, as cannot be doubted, for such unruly members as will not be tamed, they must be of a very superior class, and in that building yonder, against the opposite side of the quadrangle.

The walls of the sleeping-rooms are decorated with images of Saints, and a general refining tone is evident everywhere, in most striking contrast to the scenes of the morning. We take a bit of the stuffing from one of the beds as a suitable souvenir to place side by side with those sparrow's-wings, and bowing to the inmates, who politely curtsy, leave them, hoping that some decent fellows will soon be liberated, and will take them as spouses for settlement on the land.

Not that they can hope to attain any status in the general community, for, as we have seen, a *libéré* is for ever a branded man in New Caledonia, and his wife must share his fate. Still would they be free, yet with the stigma of the penitentiary always attaching; notwithstanding that the *libéré* may have served five years on his "concession," and also the supplementary one year and one month, when he has a right to the title deeds. This remembrance of convict taint, and the cruel solitary system, appear the greatest blots on the French penal service, and we say it with all respect to friends and allies whom otherwise we admire. So adieu to the good Mother and "sisters," whom we thank for favours long to be remembered.

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There is no municipality at Bourail. The Directors of the Prisons are almost sole masters, keeping everything in their own hands.

“As many of the life men are placed at Bourail with such an element of criminality, the Government can never help us along; and how can you expect that free men will work side by side with *condamnés et libérés?*” says a lone Frenchman; “the little town is regarded as a jewel of the penitentiary administration.”

In our rambles around, during the remainder of the afternoon, we do not fail to call upon MM. Servais Frères, the editors and publishers of *L'Indépendant de Bourail*, *Journal de la Brousse*, and *Bourail Illustré, Agricole, Industriel, Commercial*. Every Sunday these wonderful bush papers appear. The nature of their production is quite unique. Every word and every letter in these journals is verily in the actual MS. of the editors, a beautiful copper-plate hand, without a single fault or erasure of any description. The originals are lithographed; and thus are the papers circulated. This same artist produces illustrations from his fertile pen which a lover of good etchings would cherish as works of art. Each number costs half a franc, and the cheapness is marvellous for such wonderful productions.

## CHAPTER V

Leaving Bourail—The Village Carpenter—A Pretty Wife—La Foa—A Luxurious Hotel—The Bush Dentist—Malabar Settlers—The Horrors of Camp Brun—Convicts' Self-mutilation—*Escapés*—Mining—A Cattle Station—Arrival at Boulouparis—A Native House—"Raising a Bill"—St. Vincent—Native Agriculturists—"Allez, Marie"—Back at Nouméa.

It was now necessary to leave Bourail and return to Nouméa, for we were anxious about the Observatory, and that the worthy weather watchers should be thorough adepts before we left the island. Moreover, we determined to travel over land, so no time was to be lost.

So again in the saddle, at sunset on the evening of December 28, bound back to Moindou, for a new departure.

After the exertions of the day the night ride proves fatiguing, and having acquired the habit during long travel of sleeping anywhere when Nature calls—from a coil of rope under the keen eye of the albatross to a bed of sand and leaves in the Australian bush or a *coupé* in the "Flying Scotchman"—we sleep on horse-back and do not capsize.

The store-keeper of a wayside station comes up and compels us to enter for peppermint and other luxuries.

Thus Moindou, and away to bed.

But a few hours' repose and the cackling of poultry rouses one at daybreak; and an old *menuisier*, grinding his saw in the hotel verandah, makes further sleep impossible. Notwithstanding it is Sunday, the carpenter must earn his breakfast bread.

No eight-hour system for him, his work is pleasure as well as life. Invoking blessings on his bald pate, a yawn, and a big stretch—oh, the luxury of it!—followed by a swim in the Moindou river, and then off, *en route* to Nouméa overland.

English wheat grows successfully in these central parts, and we covet once more this favoured land, and a stroke of diplomacy that should float the Union Jack.

Our first halt is at Fonwari, a Government village and a camp of convicts. Beautiful are the surroundings. Lofty Norfolk Island pines, *flamboyantes*, and cocoa-nuts all abound flourishing by the wayside, the former but six feet from the *poincianas*, and towering aloft high from between them. Tall aloes and casuarinas mingle together, and wild guavas.

A few more kilomètres, and Focola is reached.

We dismount at a little *estaminet*, kept by one Espinasse, whose beautiful young wife—a Malabar girl, all decked with the rings and gems of India, proudly displayed—serves some beer. For a few minutes we rest, while the dusky beauty notes our peculiarities as she leans against the rude window-shutter beneath a broad thatch of cocoanut leaves. The mosquitoes bother sorely, but we cannot be blind to that pleasing picture. A prettier girl, surely, was never seen.

Again under way, we pass a band of *poppinées* cheerily bathing in a little creek.

Then the well-known bullock team goes tinkling by; and we pause for the instant ere reaching the town of La Foa to note the beautiful blue clitoria climbing luxuriantly by the wayside. This plant thrives to perfection, and might commercially be rendered of value. The corollas yield a blue dye, and the root is a strong purgative.

Thus to Chantneur's Hotel, and dinner. It is first-class, and one marvels at the luxuries and tokens of high culture on every side, denoting aptly the character of the host. The



dessert of luscious water-melon, pineapple, and other fruit would gladden the table of a West End mansion, and the art engravings hung on every side find place on its walls. Notwithstanding the imports of the world's best from Paris, Bryant and May's famous matches and Lea and Perrin's excellent sauce



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

WAYSIDE SCENE, NEW CALEDONIA.

are there too—just fancy! at La Foa, New Caledonia!—truly the enlightened Frenchman knows how to appreciate good things when once he gets them!

Next, to the *Hôtel de Ville*, and here an election is in progress, Sunday notwithstanding. The figure of the Republic adorns the room, and the electors lounge lazily on desks and smoke their pipes, all blessed by the presence of the village priest.

Away in the evening, this time in a buggy, which is to convey us to the town of Boulouparis. On leaving La Foa we notice a sign-board, unique in character, which notifies to all whom it may concern that the owner thereof is Monsieur Lascelle, who, for a trifling consideration, will either shoe your horse or pull out your back tooth. The gentleman, in fact, as the board indicates, is both a blacksmith and a dentist, and is quite capable of using his pliers with equal dexterity in either section of his dual profession. As we had no bad teeth, we trouble him not, but think of Mark Twain and wish the genial Clemens were only with us.

There is a Malabar village embowered in a palm grove. These natives of Western India have settled in numbers on this convict island, and devote themselves heartily to tilling the land. A wise Government encourages their immigration, knowing that the laws of Nature are all potent factors, and that the white man can never labour continuously on a large scale in the tropics with complete success. *When*, we wonder, will *Australian* legislators learn *wisdom* in this respect!

Soon we come to the monument raised to the memory of Colonel Gally Passebosc, who was shot at the spot during the native insurrection of 1878. "Honneur au vaillant soldat mort dans l'accomplissement du devoir" completes the inscription, and while cordially echoing these sentiments, one cannot repress a touch of sympathy for the brave Caledonians, who fought equally valiantly to oust the foreigner and his convicts from their favoured land of health and beauty. The familiar periwinkles, *vinca alba* and *rosea*, surround the memorial, and hornets infest its niches and corners.

Leaving now the agricultural areas, we again enter the *naouilli* or myrtaceous country, a district, remember, as nearly resembling the Australian bush as possible.

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Yonder is a vista of thatched roofs, concrete walls, and great heaps of broken stone; and floating over all is that ominous "Red, White, and Blue" flying from the truck of a long bamboo. It is a bush convict camp, actually that terrible Camp Brun, where the treatment of prisoners is even more severe than at any other New Caledonian penitentiary.

To-day, the wretched inmates are granted a respite; but what a strange Sunday is this—at Camp Brun among the *naouilli*! And that flag! What miseries has it not witnessed? The *condamnés* from thence are to be marshalled tomorrow to continue their toil on the main trunk road which they are constructing through the length of the island.

So awful is the discipline at this place that the authorities find it necessary to attach one *surveillant* and one *canaque* to every two men; and after their daily labour the *condamnés*, should they not have conducted themselves with a modicum of decorum, are stripped naked and thrust into a dark cavern, there to commune with God and atone for the day's shortcomings. Will *that* make them any better? Now, it is fully admitted that the inmates of Camp Brun are the most incorrigible of all in "La Nouvelle," and the officials by sheer cruelty but make them worse. Still, they possess the form divine, marked though they are with the stamp of crime. We pity them with such a pity, and wonder if Christ could act as *le commandant* what would *He* do.

*Condamnés* dread work at Camp Brun. Rather than submit some mutilate themselves, whittle off a finger, cut off their hands, and even pull out each other's eyes. Some have been known to take poison, and either suicide on the spot, or take it in sufficient quantity to cause serious illness and produce enforced exemption.

You gentlemen of England that live at home in ease, that quaff your champagne at Lady Twemley's dinner, smoke your

“Henry Clays,” and indulge in “bridge,” can you *realize* what convict life is *really* like in New Caledonia? Life, what *is* life to those wretched beings! And you in the dining-car of the North-Western, as you read this book, what have *you* to say to it?

“No worse than Dartmoor,” we hear you answer; “no worse than Tasmania and Norfolk Island in the early days.” How little you know in your glorified self! O Jesus, mercy!

Well, well! we hasten onward, leaving the odious place far behind, with a last look at the Tricolour. Still, we are in the bush, driving into gullies here, up again there, while the horses, thoroughly used to the rough country, speed along, past trunks and snags, now over rude bridges which shake as we pass, and anon leaving the original track do a few kilometres on that newly metalled road formed by the sweat of agony wrung by men from men.

At last, as the darkness gathers, and the white-trunked *naouillis* look more ghostly still, we near a bush *débit* where the driver suavely informs us we shall partake of *le dîner*.

We are in the very heart of the convict country, and surrounded by those desperadoes who have effected their escape. But *canaques* are after them—there is no way out but to steal a boat and put off for Queensland.

Arriving, we find that our very hand-bags are guarded by *le maître d'hôtel* and his people, lest a raid should be made upon his guests, so desperate is the case of the *escapés*.

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The mining districts are closely adjacent. Just across the ranges on the east coast are the famous nickel mines of Tchio, and Tomo mine is ahead. People are mad on prospecting hereabouts, for the resources of the mountains have scarcely been tapped. Besides nickel, chrome, cobalt, iron, and copper



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

CANAQUES ARE AFTER THEM.

are known to exist in vast quantities, and the mineral wealth of the country is marvellous.

There are about 750,000 acres of nickel-yielding land alone, 7,500 of which have as yet been worked. *What* a field for free labour! We say unhesitatingly that New Caledonia will never become developed so long as it remains a convict colony, and it is time that the French realized this in the interests of the world's commerce.

The journey is continued in the clear moonlight. Our very driver beside whom we sit is a *libéré*. We are politely cautioned to treat him as such, and to keep one's place in society. Now, keeping your place means kicking a fellow when he is down, trampling him under foot, and snubbing him should he attempt to assert his manhood. We decline such "society," abhor and detest it, so converse with the *libéré*, and run the risk.

Next through the cattle station of M. Brun, *alias* Brown, the largest ranche in all Caledonia, and fat and good looking do the beasts appear. And again do we hear that cattle raising in "La Nouvelle" is a pronounced success. Sheep-farming is a failure, as noted before, for the spike-grass injures the bronchial tubes.

So on, and while wondering how the stockman of Western Queensland, who curses the mulga as only the bushman can, would ride through the *naouilli*, we approach Boulouparis just by midnight.

A troop of *canaques* from a native village goes filing along in the dead of night with steady tread through the solitary street. Those darkies have weapons which we want to secure. A few francs, and that ugly club called *koubishou* is bought, the very kind so much used in belabouring the convicts; so is also the common spear or *kundi*, the long one called *ombeyer*, and the shorter kind, *hatee*.

At last bed and dreams of the *condamnés* at the Hôtel Caporn, built by our old friend, the island trader, in the green old times of the early days.

Next morning we inspect the aboriginal camp outside Boulouparis, yet close to the town.

A quaint-looking thing is the *casque* or house of the New Caledonian native. There stands a great conical erection nearly forty feet high. The framework is built of bamboos or long sticks, which form rafters and supports, and these are heavily thatched around with cocoanut leaves, maize stalks, sugar-cane stems, straw-refuse, or whatever else is handy. A pole from the apex to the ground is the main internal support. Reaching the interior by a narrow doorway, through which we have to crawl on all fours, we find the conical space above is shut out from direct vision by layers of boughs or bushes wrought into the thatched sides, and forming such a low ceiling that one can barely stand upright. A hole, forming the fireplace, is dug into the earthen floor. The narrow doorway, the low ceiling, the fire and the conical shape are mainly devices for protecting the inmates from mosquitoes while they sleep, since the smoke penetrates every inch of the singular dwelling without causing suffocation. The rafters and boughs glisten again with the black glow produced by the smoke, and the quaintness of the whole is somewhat relieved by an array of red boxes and absinthe cases, which have dexterously been converted into seats. Externally the top of this conical house is adorned by trophies of shells or other curios, stuck on the projecting truck of the internal pole, and such ornaments are usually gifts from one tribe to another. The foundation of the cone-shaped hut is formed of *naouilli* bark and bamboo cleverly interwoven. A few of the huts are barn-shaped or even round, but all are roofed with thatch, and walled with *naouilli*.

Many of the natives, besides holding the proud position of *canaques* to some distinguished convicts, are employed here also as native police. And proud indeed they are of their brass plates, stamped with the mark of office in manner following: "*Sûreté Publique, Nouvelle Calédonie et Dépendances No. 10 Police Indigène.*" We bid them adieu with marks of respect suited to their exalted position in the country's service.

As our supply of ready cash was giving out, Burnett managed to "raise a bill," as he called it, on some friends at Boulouparis. A very simple process is this "bill-raising" when short of actual money in New Caledonia, for every European is known, and practically his affairs also; and no one is allowed to leave the country a debtor, unless by special agreement with the creditor.

So we return to Hôtel Caporn, and there, under the spreading leaves of the Bourbon lilac, solace the inner man with chicken and wine, thinking of the convicts, and wondering if one has a right to such delicacies while erring fellow-creatures suffer.

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At six o'clock next morning, December 30th, again under way, bound right through from Boulouparis to Nouméa on the diligence, or mail coach.

What a lovely morning! Just such stimulating weather as would make any but the soulless burst out into one pæan of thanksgiving for the power to enjoy all the exquisite manifestations of glorious Nature. We revel in the rugged grandeur of the bold mountain chain which bounds the view on the left, belted round by you thin zone of mist, and reason that this fog, during the calm, clear night preceding, has arisen by the cooling power of nocturnal radiation. So the atmosphere just over the earth's surface has been lowered to a temperature below dew point, and thus, being colder than the air up





[Peace, photo., Nouméa.

A NATIVE HOUSE, NEW CALEDONIA.

the mountain slopes, has evolved by condensation of ocean vapours that beautiful gossamer mantle now lifting under the warming influence of the risen sun.

The bells on the horses' collars, which have to be carried by a law of the Government, tinkle a merry music; the *flamboyante*, in fullest flower, never looked more gorgeous, and the water of the Tomo Bay never so blue.

But a cruel antithesis will break in, and one cannot banish associations of crime and convicts. We have just passed the Ouenghi River, and the coach had to be punted over. A *condamné* performed the service, and even he is watched from a commanding buttress by a *surveillant*, whose silver bangles on his smart uniform glisten again in the clear sunlight.

So on and on. Next the Zontonta River; then a great tract covered with a kind of *pteris* fern, much resembling the English bracken; anon belts of casuarinas and more *naouilli*; while the rain-washed banks of reddish loam give a practical lesson in physical geography better by far than any text-book.

The village of St. Vincent is reached by ten o'clock, and we rest awhile with *La Veuve* Soulard, a widow lady who keeps the Hôtel de la Tamoa, and also a store adjacent. Among the *épicerie, comestibles, et chaussures en tous genres* in which she deals, "*articles de stockmen*" also find a place. Above all, she talks English, and serves a real "Old Country" breakfast of tea and eggs. We have reason to remember Madame Soulard, of St. Vincent, and intend, ere finally quitting New Caledonia, to return and make her hostelry a base of operations whence to visit the native King Jacques and his *poppinées*, who occupy a vast territory in the hills not far away.

So on again. And there, in the distance, is the conical top of Jacques's castle, and we get a glimpse of his Majesty's gardens, all cut and terraced out of the slopes of the uplands in a most wonderful manner. One can just see where the

mountain burns have been dammed and the water turned into a series of zigzag sluices sweeping round the braes in lines of mathematical beauty, and pouring their crystal rills over taro, yams, sugar-cane, and banana, all growing in one lush of vigour. Yonder are the *poppinées* working and delving on the terraces, slaving away for their noble lord and his men.

We long to pause, but cannot. That Observatory at Nouméa must be inspected, and further lessons in meteorological physics duly digested and assimilated by the newly trained observers ere we can go another such cruisé as the present.

So forward, thoroughly impressed with what we have so far seen of the wonderful energy and superiority of such Caledonian natives, or rather, of their women, as give themselves up to the truly noble work of cultivating the soil.

We now form two distinct resolutions, always providing duty allows of their performance: (a) we will return to St. Vincent and spend a day with King Jacques; (b) move heaven and earth to get into the prisons of Ile Nou and see the last of the convicts—if not an execution, at least the guillotine—for the true traveller must shrink from nothing if he would, as such, complete his education.

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Speeding on towards Nouméa, we chat with M. Verges, the driver, another of those many pleasant fellows whom fortune has thrown in our way.

He says that New Caledonia has not wholly escaped the tempestuous weather from which Eastern Australia suffers during the later summer and autumn months. Owing to the rains, floods, and gales of the preceding March, no maize can be got except at the exorbitant price of a franc per kilo.

One of the horses in our coach is a native Australian, born in Sydney, and begins to jib. Nothing that Verges can do will

induce that mare to go. "Allez, Marie," says he in gentle tones. But Marie will not gee; she is unaccustomed to the French ways and language. Only lately has she arrived from New South Wales. Something must be done, for 'tis getting late, and the mails are behind time. "Parlez à la jument, monsieur, je vous prie." What could one do but comply? There is no alternative, and readers must really excuse us. "Get up, you bleeding old ——! d——n you! get along." The result is amazing. Hearing the language of the Australian drover the mare now flies, and the village of 'Pieta is quickly reached, and time made up.

It is a pretty place, embowered in vegetation, with pigeon cots peeping out here and there.

Another lovely tropical belt of country—cocoanuts, paw-paws, bauanas, and oranges—with yellow thunbergia, or "Black-eyed Susan," flourishing in profusion all around. The orange trees are about nineteen feet apart, and grape vines are trained in between them with wondrous success.

The driver, continuing his pleasant chatter, says that thunderstorms are of very rare occurrence in New Caledonia. The high mountain peaks and ridges evidently neutralize the electrical discharge as in the highlands of Scotland.

He further tells how very strict are the officers of the Government in the matter of traffic regulations. It is imperative on every driver to fix bells on his horses' collars, and lamps must be carried by all travelling vehicles at night, even in the far-off bush. These laws are enforced by those officers and engineers whose duty it is to look after the bridges, roads, and embankments, and they virtually form divisional boards or district councils for their own regions of country.

Dumbea is the next place. Some forlorn convict ventures to ask a question of our driver, but with a fierce "Qu'est-ce que vous voulez?" and a cruel lash of the whip, he is quickly

made to retreat. Another halt at Le Pont de Français, and then past Camp Montravel into Nouméa, which we reach at six o'clock, pretty tired after twelve hours on the diligence.

To our delight, all is well at the new Observatory, so in peace to our little hotel, *dîner* and bed.

## CHAPTER VI

To the Prisons at Ile Nou—The Minister's Official Pass—The Convict Boat-crew—Wives of *Surveillants*—Sucking Babies—Bound to Hell—Again, ye Lost, "Abandon Hope"—The Guillotine—Desperadoes—An Execution described—Last Moments—*Qu'est-ce qu'à prendre pour déjeuner?*—Flipping the Blade—The Pumping Blood—The Yawning Graves—"Ici repose Henri Delplanque"—A Pleasant Change—Shipwrecked Sailors—"Oh, Sally Brown was a Bright Mulatto."

Soon were we enabled to visit Ile Nou and its terrible prisons.

The Minister of Penitentiaries had supplied a pass—all thanks to him—and all was in order. Without that bit of paper no free man, save officers, can land on that islet, that place of utter doom and the blankest despair, distant some *quatre kilomètres* from the main island, and opposite Nouméa.

Behold us one Sunday at break of day, restless and fearful lest we should miss the boat to "Tophet."

Come on, reader! Again we will be comrades—again the present tense; the experience is ever with us.

At 7.30 a.m. we are standing by the jetty, and soon the prison boat is alongside. At what hour we shall be back we do not quite know. Smart officials in dark-blue coats and white helmets are in attendance, and every pass is carefully examined lest any not authorized should obtain a footing.

Off in a few minutes, and evenly dip the oars pulled by a convict crew captained by a *surveillant*.

The passengers comprise wives and children of the warders.

Mothers are tenderly suckling their infants, and little innocents barely out of arms smile at the *condamnés*, and merrily finger toy lambs, dolls, and other playthings. To them Ile Nou is home—yes, home, sweet home, with *papa et maman*.

Think of it! To the hard-featured, wizen-faced crew it is a living hell—a hell to escape from which many have put to sea on logs or rude rafts, seeking death by sharks rather than the prospect of a grave in the convict cemetery.

See that poor wretch! He looks at yon happy child, thinks of boyhood, and wee tearlets sparkle in his hard-set eyes, which are instantly brushed away between the strokes of the heavy oar.

Steadily as the beats of a pendulum pull those downcast men, clad in their plain straw hats and dirty brown blouses, and stolidly the boat gives way and forges along.

We are nearly across. There are the prisons—just yonder, and the Tricolour flies in the morning trade.

Bound to Ile Nou! Great goodness! We think of Colonel Mumshums at that great country seat in England, twisting his moustache with a last look at the mirror, as he sallies forth with the Member for the County for a day's pheasant-shooting.

How incongruous life seems!

As the shores of "Inferno" are getting nearer, the *surveillant* captain, with a touch of blessed sympathy in his breast, draws forth a flask, and helps with generosity each man to a cognac. *He* at least has a spark of human kindness. The *condamnés* regard him with a mute kind of worship, and again with measured pull the great boat ploughs her way.

Ile Nou at last! *Surveillants* come up and kiss their wives, and toss aloft the bonny children.

Kissing at Ile Nou! Great Scott! What a paradox! The convicts look on; no words can describe their expressions.

As at Bourail, so at this place: "All ye, *les condamnés*, abandon hope that enter here."

Papers are examined, and we are escorted past the great white walls, by *bâtiments*, and along murky alley-ways between the prisons to the quarters of *le commandant*, and formally introduced. With a dismal, stoical smile savouring of prison *régime* he receives us: "J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer, monsieur."

Keen-faced *surveillants*, with features hard and sharp cut, who have done duty for thirty years or more in this odious service, take careful stock of their visitors lest haply we should be spies in disguise, and one is at once detailed off to act as showman.

The clanking of chains resounds from yonder, the agonies of the condemned seem wafted on the air.

Another warder whom we had previously met offers hospitality, and the Commandant graciously accords permission to see the guillotine.

So away with our grim conductor, as he shakes his keys with a merry twist, towards an ugly looking building with a hideous door.

Fittingly it speaks of objects beyond. We enter. We shudder. The engine of death is there before us.

The keeper of the triangular blade is a proud man indeed. He is the individual who boasts of the quality of the edge of the steel, and of the number of the unfortunates which it hath despatched to a happier sphere, where crime is unknown.

With a nervous shiver we examine the gruesome thing with its long slots. In these, when a catch is released, the three-cornered weighted knife falls on that luckless head once cherished at a mother's breast, and thrown forward by a tilting "chair" into the groove below.

With curdling blood we feel the slippery chest, so greasy and grim, into which falls the body—and—and, the basket for the head is in the corner yonder!

Verily we picture the last minutes of the condemned. Shall



we describe them from notes supplied? Well, don't quarrel, readers. Take a nip of cognac and follow on.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis half-past two o'clock on a tropical morning.

Already the penumbral glow of the zodiacal light is tinting in pale tones the eastern sky, and casting a faint glimmer over the condemned cells.

Two men within *cellules* at opposite ends of the narrow corridor have been sentenced to be guillotined. That much each one knows, but not the day of execution—that knowledge will not be vouchsafed to them till the actual morning of death.

One is named Lambertin, the other Gadoret.

The former committed murder when out on parole, frenzied by a spell of temporary liberty after years of the rigours of prison life. Gadoret had been more methodical. He too became a *libéré*, went mad with freedom, and deliberately killed a fellow convict by stabbing him in the heart over a petty quarrel.

Result—prison again and those cells. The French penal system is demoralizing. It does not bring out the best



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

LE SURVEILLANT DES CONDAMNÉS (TYPICAL),  
NEW CALEDONIAN PRISONS.

in man. *Au contraire*, it degrades him and makes him worse.

Desperadoes both; one is now tamed. Lambertin is a coward, and has awaited each dawn with an agony of suspense unthinkable to the average man; but his *camarade* can sleep, and is a very dare devil.

Punctually at three—*trois heures au matin*—a stern *surveillant* enters the *bâtiment* and proceeds to open Lambertin's cell.

"Maintenant," says he to the miserable man, "c'est le temps—the time to die. *La grande vapeur*," meaning the *Messageries* steamer, "est arrivée de France, it has brought your papers duly signed; all is *de rigueur*, in two hours, à cinq heure précisément à la guillotine! Will you eat something?"

"Oh, mon Dieu, merci!" yells the poor wretch. "Ma vie, ma vie—oh, my life—spare it, je vous prie—I cannot, I dare not die! Eat! non, je ne mange rien—ah, Dieu! Jésus pardon!"

"Va-t'en, poltron—you cringing coward!" exclaims the *surveillant*, giving him a kick. "Well, if you won't eat, get up and get dressed;" and away he goes to Gadoret's cell.

"Salutation, mon brave," says he, "c'est le bon jour de la mort, vous aussi à la guillotine à cinq heure et cinq."

"Ça ne fait rien!" answers the man—"it does not matter. Que puis-je avoir à déjeûner?"

"For breakfast? why, surely!" declares the *surveillant*, "ce que vous voulez—whatever you will—c'est pour la dernière fois."

"Je voudrais immédiatement une grande bouteille de champagne, hors d'œuvres, some oysters, un bon bifstek, a little turkey, un petit verre, et un bon cigare," replies the convict, ordering his last meal with the utmost *sangfroid*.

"Mais certainement, mon vaillant," says the officer, admiring

the *condamné's* pluck, "only be quick and get your clothes on; you shall have the best for breakfast in all 'La Nouvelle.'"

Meantime Lambertin has been howling and whimpering in the blankest despair, refusing the slightest nourishment, and calling upon God and appealing to the Saviour. The sweat stands out in bead-like drops, and falls in rills down his sallow cheeks. His turn comes first, and it is now five minutes to five. Two stout *surveillants* drag him out and support his steps towards that awful machine. The knife has been sharpened, and all is ready.

At the sight of the guillotine he trembles like a leaf. "Faites apporter un verre d'eau!" he implores; but no water is allowed him now. The executioner, with a cruelty too utterly refined, flips the hanging blade with his finger and thumb, and makes it ring the very death knell.

Lambertin stumbles, and is seized by the officers, who throw him down upon the chair-like plank. Up it tilts, hurling forward the neck.

In a second the knife has fallen, and then——!

The body of Lambertin lies pumping in the box, the head is jerking in that gruesome basket.

Attendants run with broom and bucket to clear up the mess, the trunk is removed, and so is the head, and laid aside with a touch of reverence out of sight, while sawdust is sprinkled to cover the stains.

'Tis now Gadoret's turn, and five minutes have elapsed. He has finished his breakfast, and all the champagne, and now comes firmly forth, smoking the butt of his cigar.

"Maintenant pour la dernière fumée!" exclaims the *surveillant*, rolling rapidly a cigarette and handing it to the wretch as he marches to the guillotine, "Quelques instants seulement de la vie! Avez-vous peur?" "Sapristi! mais non, salutation au diable," says he, taking the cigarette.

Ten seconds left !

“Houpe-là! Vive l’Enfer!” shouts the man, flinging himself on the plank. A dull thud, and off rolls the head, its mouth and muscles twitching and jumping in the most frightful manner, while the eyes are wide open and looking up at the machine.

For several seconds that head lives !

The blood pours from the trunk in convulsive jets from the main arteries—the body quakes, and a bag of sawdust completes the tragedy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gladly we leave the place of execution, and dejected and heart-sick wander past the solitary cells like those at Bourail, with the ferocious *canaques*, in their red turbans, looking with curiosity as we proceed next to the *condamnés* cemetery. Yonder are convicts awaiting the barber.

On the way we meet a gang coming in from labour. Some are so tired and fagged that they can barely walk, whereupon the officer in attendance picks up stones and flings them at the laggards to make them go the faster.

We pause at the cottage of a warder whom we had seen at Brisbane, whither he was sent to recapture *escapés* who had reached Queensland after perils untold in an open boat—perils by sharks, perils by hurricanes, and all the horrors of hunger and thirst.

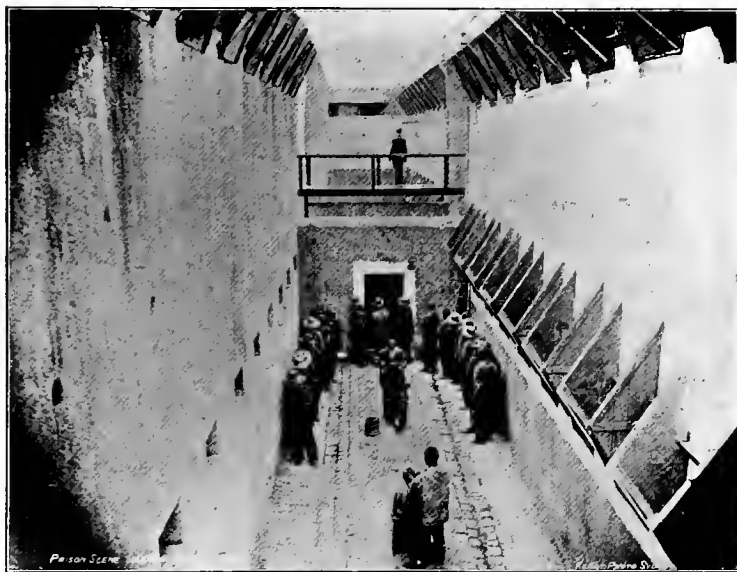
His kind wife receives us, and her eyes look pity as worn-out convicts go wearily by.

Oh, woman, thy errand is mercy, thy nature love !

The children play happily, and shake hands with monsieur.

We hear of one wretch who, when released from the cells, went raving mad with the sense of partial freedom. He ran three times round Ile Nou, and at last managed to reach the main island in a boat. There he outraged the first female he

met, a woman sixty years old, bit off her breasts, and was promptly sentenced to be guillotined in public. All Nouméa rose at three o'clock, long before sunrise, to see that execution. Now, the moral is, "Treat men as beasts, and you develop the beast in them."



[Kerry and Co., photo., Sydney.]

CONVICTS AWAITING THE BARBER.

But we hasten onward, to the graveyard, for our guide is waiting.

The way to the cemetery—that one place of rest—is by a lovely avenue of cocoanut palms, seeming to tell of hope—yes, hope—beyond the tomb, even for the guillotined.

We reach the graves—some are open, two awful metres deep, ready—aye, ready—to receive the bodies of those who have yet

to suffer. The waves of the blue Pacific gently lave the beach but a few yards distant. A happy bird twitters its morning carol, butterflies flit merrily around, and all nature is beautiful, save to those grave-diggers—those “men” of Ile Nou—those convict sextons with the withered faces.

On one black tomb-board, so hideous and gaunt, we read the name of an Algerian Arab—“18219. Boudoéma Ben Brahim, Décédé 14 Xbre, 1889.”

Other graves are around in awful plenty, where lie the remains of those guillotined. On those of such of the executed as died in the Catholic faith, nothing but the plain mound with the ugly blackboard is allowed. Even the sign of the cross is forbidden; and not a flower, not a shell, not one token of regard dare a *camarade* place over the remains.

Verily the silence of death enwraps all! Never can we forget this morning!

Next we pass a little gate and enter the burying-place of those *condamnés* who happily died a natural death. Crosses are allowed here, and also other tender marks of love and respect.

By an acacia tree in the middle stands out a large image of the crucified Saviour.

One inscription we especially note. It tells of a youth whom crime had stamped. “Ici repose Henri Delplanque, décédé l'âge 22, regretté de ses amis.” The purple periwinkle covers his body, and a kind *surveillant* had laid some shells, while bits of coral form a neat little cordon around the tumulus.

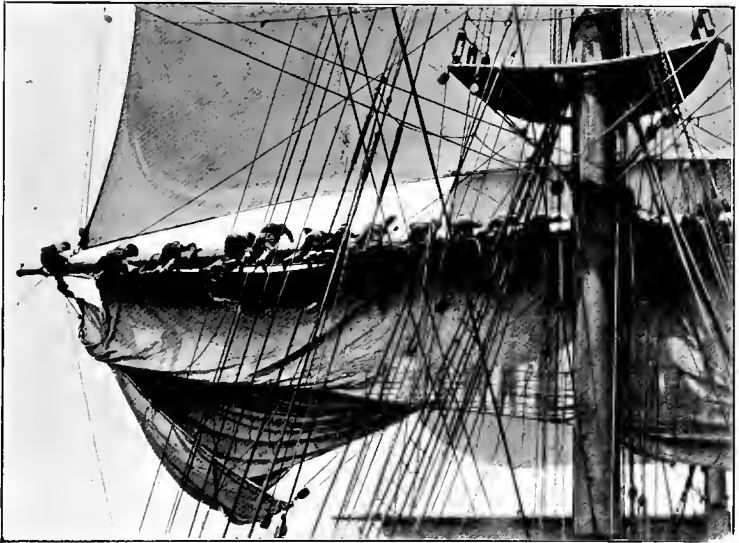
Every few years friends may hear who has died and who has been executed.

It is pleasant to leave this place of death, to taste the good cheer of M Gradon, another *surveillant*, who braces our nerves with a nip of absinthe.

The boat is ready, and glad beyond measure are we to leave Ile Nou, this islet of wretchedness, of dingy cells and the ghastly guillotine, of convict cemeteries and yawning graves.

So back to Nouméa.

And what a pleasant change awaits us! Camped in the



[H. Hughes and Son, photo

TALES GO WITH ZEST.

garden at the little hotel is the shipwrecked crew of the noble *Ayrshire*, a full-rigged ship laden with nickel ore, just gone ashore at Tchio on the east coast, owing to the blundering of a native pilot.

The sea chests are crowded in the hotel yard, and Olsen of Goole is spinning a yarn. Memories of days once spent at sea come back with a swell, and tales of the old times go with a zest. Wadsworth tells of a spree in London when

Kitty robbed him, and he hove to in a "hurricane" down Commercial Road; while Peter the Swede, in torn dungarees, thinks of the joys of Radcliffe Highway, and goes to the landlord to get some grog.

Ye gods, what an ending to a dismal day! What a happy off-set to the blues of the morning!

All hands make merry and the chanties roll; *les messieurs* laugh, and *libérés* listen as Lewis starts an old refrain, and all join in the cheery chorus—

"Oh, Sally Brown was a bright mulatto,

*Chorus.*—Aye, aye, roll and go;

Oh, Sally Brown of New York City,

*Chorus.*—I'll spend my money on Sally Brown."

One fellow shows his brawny breast tattooed in colours with the Union Jack; another, his back all etched with a fox hunt, and the hounds in full cry as the fox disappears.

So to bed at last, as we think of the sea, and less of Ile Nou.



## CHAPTER VII

Visit to King Jacques—A Sailor Companion—"Be a boy as long as you can"—The Village of Pieta—The King's Territory—His Majesty—Elephantiasis—Toasting the Natives—The Queen—A Royal Feast—Native Music—Songs of the Sea—The Native Village—The King's Garden—Good-bye "La Nouvelle."

As all continues well at the Observatory, we determine to make the most of such time as is left.

So one evening away to visit King Jacques, *Chef des Indigènes*, at his camp and village near St. Vincent.

We have room for the reader, so let him imagine himself seated in the buggy hired for the occasion, and leaving Nouméa about ten o'clock one night in January.

For companions we have a guest from the hotel, and one of the shipwrecked sailors of the *Ayrshire*. The latter we invite not only since the trip will be beneficial after his recent sufferings, but because he is a good chanty-man, and thus shall we be able to astonish the natives with "blue water" music.

Away, then, past Camp Montravel, where we halt at a wayside inn, as our sailor feels he must have a nip—"grog bewitched and water begrudged."

On again. We have bones and triangle carefully stowed in the pocket, and soon "We're all bound to go," with salt water accompaniment, resounds on the midnight air. Let him cavil who likes.

Dearly as we love scientific work, there is a time for rest,

and rest means change, and change is one of the laws of life. Each man's aim should be happiness, and happy will we be while we may.

Well do we remember the words of the late Sir Robert Christison, of Edinburgh, one of our best and most valued friends, who always took an interest in old Ben Nevis, and our work on that famous mountain. Some while before his death, having long passed the allotted span, he was walking along Princes Street one bitter morning in the depths of winter, full speed ahead, erect, sprightly, and defying the weather.

"Wragge, my lad," said Sir Robert, "remain a boy as long as you can; age comes soon enough, and the greatest mistake a man can make is to imagine that he is getting old." Ever since have we striven to act up to his noble advice, and let those who read follow it also.

We arrive at Pieta about 1.30 a.m., and, knocking up the landlord, decide to spend the night at the inn.

Up at a quarter-past five, we are soon ready, and leave this pretty place with its thatched houses, palms, wild guavas, bamboos, Tahitian "aloes," and snuggling dove cots. A long drive through *naouilli* country follows. Great strings of buffalo grass are trailing by the wayside, over big nodules of iron-stone; layers of slate are in the cuttings, and the pretty pink convolvulus winds in and out.

A daceo or kingfisher, first cousin to the Australian "laughing jackass," is perched on the telegraph wire, and swallows and butterflies innumerable flit merrily around.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another few miles and we are again in King Jacques's territory, with its wonderful terraced gardens, and lush of sugar cane, yams, and bananas. Thus to Madame Soulard's inn at St. Vincent, whence we determine to take departure for

the native village. The estimable widow greets us with pleasure, and after a snack of something good we start afoot, bound straight away for the great king's *casque*.

To propitiate royalty we take a bottle of square gin ; and so through the bush in single file, "Jack," our sailor, humming " Good bye, Lady," and thinking himself in for the biggest spree of his lifetime.

And what a glorious morning ! Another of those delightful days which makes mere existence in " La Nouvelle "—except for a convict—a very pleasure.

Soon we meet a grand old *indigène*, with a beard tinged with grey, a native of some seventy years, strolling proudly along, and bearing his umbrella over a woolly head with great dignity. We humbly approach, thinking him none other than King Jacques himself. He is, however, the king's father. We at once salute with due reverence. The salutation is quickly returned by handshaking with great gusto.

The country around is all volcanic, and large pieces of lava covered with steam-holes lie strewn about. Our friend from the hotel longs to examine the surrounding hills, declaring that wherever there is volcanic action of such a character, the prospector may expect mineral wealth.

Soon we reached a pleasant spot watered by one of those refreshing little rivers which are so numerous and which fertilize the sides of the mountains and valleys.

There are the natives busily engaged with cross-cut saws stripping bark from the *naouillis*, as material for house building.

The dusky king himself is here, superintending the operations of his loyal subjects, who for some urgent reason are toiling vigorously, having left the garden work to their fat-bellied *poppinées*. We salute him. His bearing at first is somewhat distant. A fine stolid Caledonian he is, with beard, whiskers, and a head of grizzly hair, curly and very crisp,

bound round with a turban of turkey red. He has a good set of teeth, and is about forty-five.

King though he be, we mean to examine him and note his peculiarities. Great holes, each about an inch in diameter, have been pierced through the lobes of his ample ears.

Beneath his *sulu* is the very singular decoration which all males adopt, tied by the waist in the long-knotted folds of a red-and-white handkerchief. His Majesty shows signs of some displeasure, but with ceremony we conciliate him in polite French, dubbing him "Le grand roi de la Nouvelle Calédonie entière."

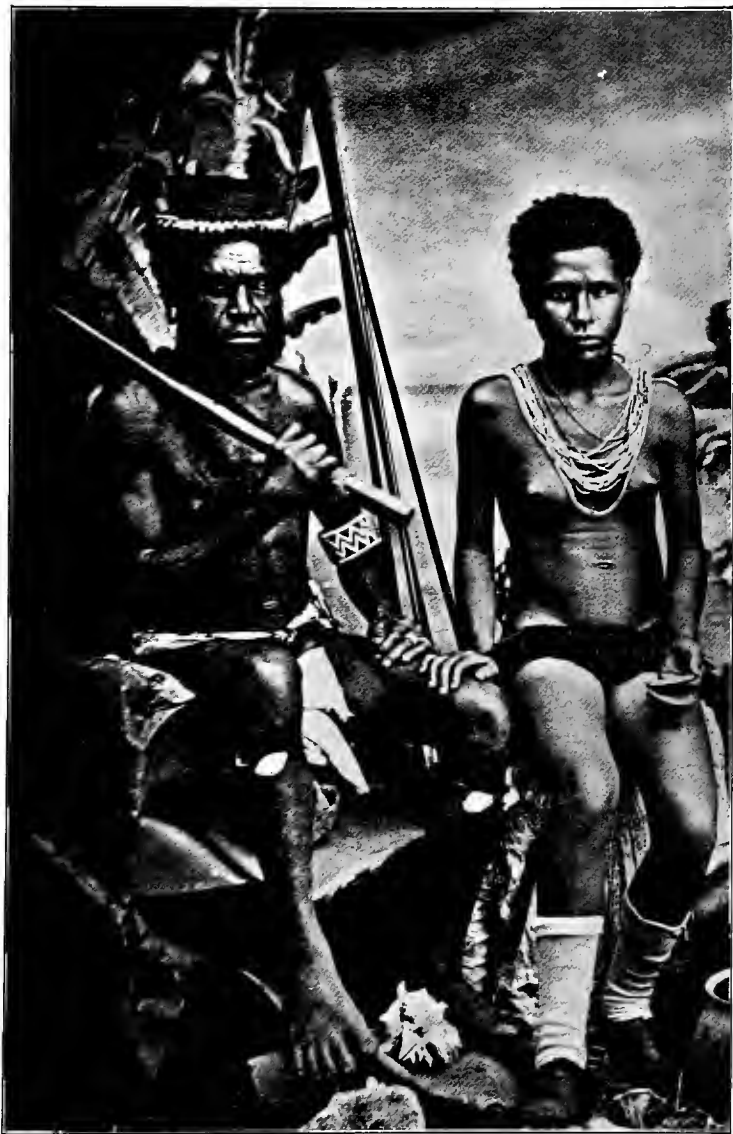
This at once has the desired effect. The features relax, he is instantly pacified, and suffers one to examine his legs, which, with other members, are horribly affected with elephantiasis.\* He now leads the way to where more of his men are engaged, and placing himself on a log, and bidding us be seated, intimates that he wishes to partake of refreshments and to broach the bottle.

"Donnez le pourboire, messieurs."

Our *cocher*, who is also present, produces a corkscrew, and one of the subjects runs for a glass. The king tastes and mightily approves, and after his royal lips have blessed the cup, it is passed around, elephantiasis and microbes notwithstanding.

Hospitality demands that we toast his men also, and the great chief says that he wants some more. Perforce we submit. The king smartly commands one of his workers to obey our behests and run with all speed to Madame Soulard's.

\* A foul blood and skin disease probably caused by filarial worms, the result of mosquito bites on types of the native constitution. Frequently it affects the genital organs, and some natives of New Caledonia can only get about by wheeling the testes before them in a barrow. See also the Tahiti section of this book.



KING JACQUES AND HIS QUEEN.

[Coulton, photo.]

We now accompany him to a shady grove, through which runs a charming little creek, surrounded by foliage of tropic beauty. His Majesty bids us be seated on the ground beside him, and his chosen male subjects—their hair adorned with bamboo combs from six to nine inches long, and carved as exquisitely as anything of the kind in Japan—squat picturesquely in front, looking, intellectually, as fine a body of Kanakas as any in the Pacific.

We secure a few specimens of the combs as valuable additions to our ethnographical collection, and serving to remind one of the exceeding hospitality and courtesy of the natives.

Barring the fact that the royal leg, all scaly and swollen with elephantiasis, is rather too near, we are comfortable enough, and can take stock of the noble monarch in some detail. Many a cicatrix and quaint tattoo mark adorn the body, and the head is crowned by that blue and turkey-red turban, in which are stuck, jauntily, his pipe and tobacco. When fully dressed the head is capped with a plume of feathers, with comb projecting over the forehead.

The women of the tribe are seated by themselves on the opposite side of the creek, preparing the midday meal. The king now rises, as a buxom *poppinée*, clad in the loose gown familiar to the islands, carrying a fine baby, and smoking an elaborately carved meerschaum pipe, crosses the rivulet and deferentially approaches. It is the queen herself. She brings boiled crabs, yams, and taro. The baby—chubby, little chap—is heir-apparent to the king's dominions, and shows no trace of the disease from which his father suffers.

With profound respect and suitable obeisance, the queen places the crabs and taro at the scabby feet of her lord and master, and for the moment hesitates as she surveys his guests. But she has no right to linger—custom forbids her eating with

any man. She must retire to her women yonder, and there take her taro.

With an imperious wave of the hand, the king bids her "begone." Still hesitating, she would like to retain a morsel of crab.

"You do not steal from me, madam," exclaims the dusky potentate in excellent English.

Not daring to disobey, she recrosses the creek back to her women, with an air and dignity of manner worthy of a State ball-room.

The monarch now himself hands food to each of us, and in tones decisive commands us to eat. Shuddering at the thought of elephantiasis, one cannot refuse. A dozen picked men, with pipes stuck behind the ears, just as a clerk would place his pen, are invited too, and thankfully accept the rations from the royal hands. Each responds "Merci," and makes a bow.

By this time the fellow arrives from St. Vincent with three bottles of gin, and a gleam of satisfaction lights the king's black face. The glass being handy, he first helps himself, and then is the loving cup passed round with the greatest friendliness and most perfect decorum; but the women are not allowed to touch the liquor. Among the Australian blacks, under similar circumstances, a big fight would ensue, yet each of these splendid savages takes his nip with gratitude and thankfulness of heart at the hands of the monarch who deals out to each his portion, and will allow none to drink without us.

"Monsieur le grand roi, demandez de la musique indigène, s'il vous plaît," we ask, wishing to hear a little native music.

A word from the chieftain immediately has an effect. The subjects bustle about here and there; one cuts pieces of

*naouilli* bark, another collects round bits of stick and empty bottles, and a third discovers a few old jam tins.

And now a wild, weird sing-song strain bursts upon the air, and the sticks are rattled merrily upon the bits of bark and tin in perfect time, while others slap their thick thighs and whistle in unison.

What a novel experience! The wild chant with tom-tom accompaniment grows louder and wilder still, and finally ends up with a shrill whoop and cheer, echoing in waves through the depths of the jungle.

The king now begs us to favour the company. We suggest a rollicking sea chanty; so Jack, our sailor, gives "Blow the Man down," and the chorus goes in right good style. "C'est la bonne musique," says his Majesty, who nods hearty approval; and all clap hands, and thank with great courtesy as "belay" brings that well-known "hymn" to a close. The gin bottles are not yet empty, and what remains is carefully served out by Jacques, who allows no one to help himself.

More wild music and rattling tom-toms, and then come "Fire down Below," "Bony was a Warrior," and other songs sacred to "blue water," to the great delight of his swarthy Majesty, who squats on his haunches with great *hauteur*.

Readers, forgive—we were even as boys out of school.

The tribe numbers fifteen thousand, and the women do all the work, except felling trees, house-building, and such other tasks as are beyond their powers.

One and all smoke tobacco, but opium is unknown, and the only beverages are tea and water.

\* \* \* \* \*

Luncheon over, the king takes his son and heir, delicately washes the child's feet in the creek, and afterwards reclines in siesta in the shade, begging to be excused on account of the great heat, with much politeness.



He now deputed one of his warriors to accompany us as guide to the native village and gardens on the slopes of yonder



[Peace, photo., Nouméa.]

A VILLAGE GROUP IN "LA NOUVELLE."

hill, which we are most anxious to inspect; but the camp, we are informed, is practically deserted, except by night.

We have already seen native houses at Boulouparis, but those here, although built in the same way, of sticks and rafters skilfully interwoven and thatched with fibre and grass,

are much superior; and everywhere are indications of intelligence and education of a very high order.

Beautiful mats cover the earthy floor, and dexterously wrought baskets, of cocoa-palm leaves and reeds, made for carrying garden produce, lie here and there. So do stone tomahawks and clubs; while grotesque-looking gourds for holding water, weaved around and ornamented with cocoanut fibre, hang on the boughs supporting the thatch, which glows and glistens again like Brunswick black, as a result of the evening fires.

Those fires, we have seen, are lit in the centre of each edifice, and are mainly useful in preventing, by the smoke, the attacks of the numerous mosquitoes.

The houses, some conical, others with vertical walls and partly V-shaped roofs, are but 12 feet from each other; and in the narrow spaces between them are the gorgeous *flamboyantes* and graceful palm trees.

Family graves are in rather too close proximity. Here and there, close to the dwellings, are little fences of lantana, enclosing pretty flower-beds, which mark the last resting-places of those near and dear.

The king's palace, or *casque*, is, of course, the typical conical structure. And a gorgeous affair it is, with the gigantic trophy of shells—a gift from a minor chief—adorning the apex, and spears are stuck fantastically in the thatch and *naouilli* bark. Fine mats are in the interior, and the boughs and leaves of the internal rafters shine with a black more glowing than before. Evidently the mosquito is not allowed to sip royal blood.

But the king has not found a panacea for fleas, for his ancestral seat is infested by them; so says our native guide, with a touch of disgust, for his name is none other than “Joe Adrien,” who once lived in Sydney as servant at Hunters' Hill College.

How the monarch enters his dwelling, followed by his buxom spouse, is somewhat a mystery. His elephantiasosed legs must occasionally get scratched, seeing that the entrance is but 3 feet 6 inches high, and 2 feet 9 inches wide. In front are two Norfolk Island pines, which add additional lustre to the edifice. This *casque* is especially used on State occasions, and is also employed as a council chamber or house of assembly.

There is another and oblong building closely adjacent, fitted with a tiny door, most carefully padlocked. This, says the guide, with a touch of humour, is the *strictly* private residence of his sovereign, into which none may enter save members of the household. We learn that King Jacques has two other wives besides the queen; and, until lately, had five, all told. As to marital squabbles, nothing was said.

Among the natives of New Caledonia capital punishment is unknown. Any offender against the rule of Jacques receives either a thrashing with a bamboo or cane, or else he is lashed to a tree with a good stout rope, and left out all night.

\* \* \* \* \*

We now wander in parts of the native garden, comprising some hundreds of acres of sugar-cane, bananas, taro, and other produce thriving on the slopes of the surrounding hills.

How is such wondrous fertility produced? Well, the noble savage has used the brain which Nature gave him, and has turned her forces to his own use, instead of letting them run to waste. He has brought himself into harmony with physical laws, and so it is. The mountain burns have been dammed by these people, and their sparkling waters turned here, diverted there, zigzagged yonder, and channeled again into made courses, engineered with amazing skill, forming a natural result with the fruits of labour.

As we pause and wonder at the ingenuity displayed, one

heartily wishes that this entire tribe could be exported to Australia, there to teach some of the self-opinioned settlers the art of mountain cultivation. Every saddle, every spur, every ridge is utilized.

We linger yet and take a siesta with a family party by a *casuarina* tree. That old woman with the pipe stuck in the torn lobes of her right ear has a bundle of luscious cane, and we get a good chew. There is another *poppinée* scraping her taro, and we nurse her bonny pickaninnies, to her great delight. And pigs, having strange-looking "wattles" or "drops" of skin hanging from the lower jaws, are even willing to befriend us. All is happiness and peace.

The diseases suffered so terribly by the Australian natives are absolutely unknown in this Eden of "La Nouvelle," and as we gaze on the little thatched dwellings around, covered in many instances with the sweet-smelling *boussingaultia* and other creepers, and surrounded with flowers and little fences, we think what an elysium this island would be if it were not for the convict element.

We have seen that the Caledonian *canaques* cordially hate the *condamnés*, and when not superintending the work of their *poppinées* are ever ready to enter the *Police Indigène*, and hound down any such that escape to the hills. Those actually in the Government service take a special pleasure in searching every outward-bound steamer lest a luckless convict should have stowed himself away. They go aboard with those ugly phallic clubs, search between decks, in the fore peak, among the cargo—everywhere, in fact, save the captain's cabin. Such employment seems to affect or brutalize the features of the native Caledonian, more savage-looking fellows we have seldom seen than those employed in the prisons and in searching the ships, while such as pass their time in their native camps and plantations—as those we have had the pleasure of interviewing to-day

—have a softened aspect of countenance thoroughly indicative of their genial mode of life. So much for environment and adaptation!

But we must hasten onward. Several of our kind enter-



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

A NEW CALEDONIAN VILLAGE | SCENE.

tainers accompany us back to St. Vincent, and are duly rewarded with suitable presents.

Dinner over, we return to Nouméa, travel all night, and reach the capital by daybreak in time for the outgoing mail-boat.

\* \* \* \* \*

So good-bye, "La Nouvelle"! Farewell, New Caledonia!  
Later on we shall come again.

We have met kindness alike from the noble Governor, the hard *surveillant*, the broken *libéré*, and the dusky native—even the “life-men” gave a softer look—and—well, we wish you could join the Commonwealth of a free Australia!

NOTE.—The average maximum temperature in the shade for the year in New Caledonia is  $77\cdot7^{\circ}$ , the minimum  $61\cdot9^{\circ}$ , and the annual mean  $69\cdot8^{\circ}$  Fahr. The south-east wind largely prevails, and the rainfall on the lowlands is about 23 to 24 inches. The instruments supplied were by Adie, Casella, Hicks, and Negretti and Zambra, London, each name being a guarantee of excellence.—C. L. W.

PART II

“THE VOWEL ISLAND”

OR

A TRIP TO TAHITI *VIA* RAROTONGA  
AND RAIATEA





## “THE VOWEL ISLAND”

### INTRODUCTION

WE have travelled a lot, and can speak from knowledge. A trip to Tahiti, the “Vowel Island,” whether from Auckland or San Francisco, is specially to be recommended. At any time of the year it is one that will afford a unique and most charming experience. Travel is now included in an educational curriculum, and Tahiti on no account should be omitted.

What a halo of romance hangs over the place! To one wishing relief from the cares of business, the invalid seeking health, the traveller extended information, and the tourist a *real* good time,—to all such we say, “Go to Tahiti, if only for the steamer’s stay.”

There is no place nicer in all the earth. If you remain longer, so much the better. The climate is perfect, the scenery magnificent, the natives delightful. In fact, the very aura of the place possesses a peculiar and subtle charm that is irresistible, only—don’t get “Society Islandized,” or maybe you’ll stop there, and end your days in Paradise. Those who go want to remain, and when they have left feel home-sick.

Why do we call Tahiti the “Vowel Island?” There are but eight consonants in the native alphabet.\* They circumflex the vowels, ring them, twist them, and accentuate them in a marvellous manner, and the whole Tahitian language, a

\* The following is the alphabet complete : a, e, f, h, i, m, n, o, p, r, t, u, v.

dialect of Maori, is a vowel symphony, musical, bubbling, and vastly pleasing, and every word must end with a vowel.

We came for a month, and have stayed another, exploring, making collections, and getting experience. Still we are here, writing under the shade of the spreading palm trees down by the beach at the village of Patutoa.

Later we intend to write more extensively; but for the nonce let it suffice to tell those from New Zealand, or Europe and America, what can be seen and done with reasonable energy during the few days that the steamer stays at Papeete, the capital.

Remember that from London to Tahiti *viâ* San Francisco is now but a matter of twenty-one days, from Sydney sixteen, and from Auckland ten days. If travelling from New Zealand it will probably be with Captain Hutton of the *Taviuni* (one of the Union Company's boats), known to the sailor as a "good old man," and no higher praise can be given him. If from California, by the Oceanic Company's steamer, likely it will be the *Mariposa*, with Captain Rennie, a splendid seaman and an old friend.

Each boat is excellent. That is enough. The Companies are too well known to need their merits advertised.

Assuming that one starts from Auckland, as we did, you will have a peep at Rarotonga and Raiatea, where the boat calls; and through travellers from America to wondrous Maoriland by the Tahiti track will find something to interest them in this portion of our narrative, as they will call at those beautiful islands also.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now then, colonials, and you with the tired brain, whoever you may be, come along! Perhaps you belong to the Civil Service, and are worried to death in the "Mill of Red Tape." Follow, oh, follow to where there is peace. There's

time for the trip in your annual holiday; then cull from the savings and take a ticket. Maybe you are a bank manager or the more humble clerk told by the doctor to drop those drafts and have a spell; parson, lawyer, or whatever else, it's all the same.

One cannot work for ever, and a holiday is as necessary to the human economy as daily bread and the air we breathe. Work and rest, action and reaction, come within the realm of cosmic law as suns “die” and others are born, as winter follows summer and night the day; and if we would live in harmony with first principles we, too, must obey the dictum of God, or cords will snap and Nature be avenged by debiting our account in the Bank of Life with compound interest at cent per cent. What, then, can be better than a trip to the islands? Change of scene means renewed health. And if you are a lady, bored by the vagaries of artificial “society,” longing for the beautiful and the freedom of Nature, you come too, and bring your relations. Go to the Union or the Oceanic Company and book for Tahiti. The fares are cheap enough; and, after all, what's the good of money unless rationally used? You cannot take it with you across the Styx, and it may happen that you'll get notions from your dusky sisters—only, for God's sake, be *yourself*; drop all “side,” if only for a month, in the pilgrimage of life—and—don't get jealous; don't impute evil where there is none. Learn, oh, learn! that the world is wide, although but a molecule in an Endless Universe, and that people differ, and customs too, while yet belonging to the Eternal Whole.

Now follow our experience from Auckland to Papeete; yours may be like it. Then we'll become the *fidus Achates*, and together explore the “Vowel Island.”



## SECTION I

### VOYAGE TO TAHITI

VIA RAROTONGA AND RAIATEA

#### CHAPTER I

To the "Summer Isles" of Eden—Blue Water again—Salt Sea Spray—  
That Old Submerged Continent—Weather—Jensen, A.B.—"Oh!  
Ranzo, Boys."

THE steamer leaves at evening time. Away, then! As the last lights of Auckland fade in the dim distance, while the pall of night settles over the boundless Pacific, one cannot but exclaim "Hurrah for Tahiti!—no letters, no telegrams, no callers, just a well-earned rest."

One thinks of sailing-ship days, the smell of marline is as perfume from Babylon, the odour of the pitch-pot never so delicious, and the tune of the good old chanty, "Ranzo," runs through the head:—

"We sailed away for the Tropic Seas,  
*Chorus.*—Ranzo, boys! Ranzo!  
Setting our royals to the balmy breeze,  
*Chorus.*—Ranzo, boys! oh, Ranzo!"

Yes! after long Directorship of the Australasian Weather Bureau; after all the barometric reductions, percentages of humidity, vapour tensions and isothermals; after lectures galore and hard, hard work;—we are again as a lad off for a holiday, bound to the isle of youth and beauty. The mind goes

back to sailor days when we lay aloft and slid down the backstays.

We think of Jack out for a spree, and the bally old moke that wouldn't answer his helm; we see the "old man" overhauling his accounts, rendered in triplicate, and think of the time when he went for us with a slate because we asked him for G.M.T.

Travels since then the wide world over vibrate in the brain, and—now the *Taviuni*, bound to Tahiti!

How much one should value the present *now*, and bear in mind that "death" comes nearer!

Within two days we are off the Kermadecs. In this neighbourhood is an area of ocean intensely interesting from a hydrographic and geological point of view. In fact, the steamer's track is over submarine mountains and near appalling precipices that once in the long dim past unquestionably were attached to an old continent, submerged by the internal convulsions of our cooling planet some 250,000 years ago. Soundings taken by the Admiralty authorities show depths from half a mile to over five miles, and in only one other place of Earth's oceans does the depth equal the last-named value. That the islands mentioned, and others in the South Pacific, together with New Zealand, once formed part of this ancient land there can be no reasonable doubt. Genuine research substantiates this statement. We'll talk of it again when dealing with Tahiti and the Eastern Pacific.

The weather between New Zealand and the Cook Group is variable, depending upon the season of the year. In the winter months a tongue or wedge from what is known to meteorologists as an Antarctic V-disturbance may extend northwards towards the Kermadecs. That's the time for strong southwesters when albatross and molly hawks enjoy the fun, and the pretty Cape pigeon skims the leaden billows, circling and twisting in the

seething wake as the clouds tear past, and the elements join in a meteorological opera.

If, however, conditions are those of high pressure or an anti-cyclonic nucleus, scarce a ripple will be noticed on the heaving ocean. So with us during the first four days. But as the



[De Maus, photo., Port Chalmers.

SS. "TAVIUNI," BOUND TO TAHITI.

Tropic of Capricorn is approached, the meteorological influence frequently becomes equatorial in type and the diurnal range of the barometer less, while atmospheric gradients are steeper, producing stronger easterlies blowing in squalls, owing to change of latitude from higher pressures to lower. Such may particularly be expected during the spring months, and was our experience as distances from the Cook Islands decreased.

But with a good ship like the *Taviuni*, well found in every

respect, and a skilful captain, the passenger is practically safer at sea than on land, where he may be run down by a bicycle or electrocuted by a tram wire.

And yet some people never realize this, and that a blow at sea freshens one up and brushes away some obdurate cobweb. Oh yes! a bit of a blow under these easterlies; just a dash of "salt sea spray" and thoughts of that "girl with the blue dress on," as the vessel is merrily "diving bows under" and ships a big sea, while the water goes rattling and splashing down the scuppers—just enough to baptize the long-shorers in the steerage, and make them kow-tow to Father Neptune.

"Oh, Jenny, keep your oatcakes warm!" mutters Jensen, an A.B. in sea-boots, as cracker hash goes lurching from the tin; and away he goes to the watch below, thinking of the time when he scudded under bare poles in a flour-barrel down Water Street, Liverpool, and of the lass he left behind him.

"Old Wragge's aboard," says Wells, the bos'n, turning his quid—"that chap from the Weather Office what found a storm and called it 'Emma;' we'll get it worse afore it's better. Oh, Ranzo, boys!"

But altogether a charming passage—positively delightful, renewing strength in body and mind—and early on the morning of the sixth day, while yet dark, the great hills of Rarotonga loom boldly up—the "Summer Isles of Eden" at last!



## CHAPTER II

Rarotonga—The Genial Tropics—Prohibition—Native Welcome—Superb Vegetation—A Mission Church—Queen Makea—Customs and Latitude—Fining the Natives—Island Sociology—Visiting a Native House—A Fertile Valley—Island Stores—A Rarotongan Bungalow—A Native Wife—The Shepherd—Coprah and Cocoanuts—Drive round the Island—Notes by the Way—Life and Death—Land Tenure—Nature in Rarotonga—Climate—Bush Beer and Sectarianism—Good-bye !

A WARM, soft atmosphere, sweet as Elysium, tells of the tropics ; the break of the water over the reef makes soothing music, and a few lights flicker from the palm-thatched huts out yonder on the shore line, at the little town of Avarua.

Daylight discloses a lovely island and mountainous, with jagged and stern peaks like giant sentinels reaching to the clouds. Two great tiers of luxuriant vegetation cover the sombre hills to the very summits, the highest of which is 2,200 feet ; and below, fringing the beach, are the cocoanut palms in myriads, forming together a glorious picture.

\* \* \* \* \*

“No drinks to-day, gentlemen,” comes sounding from below, and the bland chief steward, with a smile and knowing wink, promptly closes the bar and hands the key to the captain’s keeping.

“Why this edict ?” asks Major Umphank, an old Anglo-Indian, who likes his brandy-and-soda when he feels that way.

“You know, sir,” explains the steward in his softest tones,

“the Cook Islands have lately been annexed to New Zealand. To-day the new law comes into operation, prohibiting the sale of liquor under a penalty of £100. It is on account of the—ah—natives, sir; and we dare not even sell it on board the boat—not, in fact, until the anchor is up, and she is well under way for Raiatea.”

“Oh, damn the niggers!” blusters the major. “Why should decent white people be subject to tyranny for dirty sons of sea-cows?”

“Stay, major, not so fast,” one ventures to exclaim. “The natives are scions of the noble Maori race, and are among the finest in the whole Pacific; we, you see, should set an example.”

“I believe in the Universal Brotherhood of Man,” chimes in another. “Where does Christianity come in, I should like to know? Strikes me if Christ came again He’d scourge the whites and leave the darkies alone.”

The major looks sheepish, and the opinion is current that prohibition in Rarotonga is yet a wise measure, worthy of the Seddon Ministry. But complaints are loud, as a report is abroad that even light wine will soon be forbidden in the private house of a European, save “by the doctor’s orders.” Surely, this is *too* much!

Turning glasses landwards, we await a canoe for the shore. The houses clustered among the palms are of the wooden type, roofed with that hideous galvanised iron so prevalent in New Zealand, except, of course, the native huts, which are mainly of bamboo and palm leaves, ever so picturesque.

“Ten hours ashore!” exclaims the chief officer.

Ten hours! How much can be done in the time if one *will* but use powers of observation, and make the most of opportunities with an intelligent mind! Why, some people learn more of a place in such a brief period than others who



TYPICAL EUROPEAN HOUSES ON THE BEACH, AVARUA, RAROTONGA.

[G. R. Crummer, photo.]

stay a month who will not harmonize with lavish Nature, whose perception is dulled, and whose only thoughts are of dollars and "bridge," with a full stomach, and indolence compatible with the effort of life.

The catamarans, with the quaint pole outriggers, come alongside, and other boats too, bearing the *élite* of the place, and away we go, all anxious to land. The water is of the deepest blue, tinged with purple. Never before in any latitude have we seen the sea such a wondrous colour, except off the Canaries by grand Teneriffe.

The natives pull with a will, their brown skins gleaming in the light. What an innocent, happy, child-like lot! Such is the impression. The Maori is stamped on every face, kindness sparkles in every eye. One thinks of Becke and all the romance of these charming South Seas.

Once ashore, we are welcomed by women and girls in gay shawls, and men clad in loose pink shirts and the elaborate *pareu*, or loin-cloth, similar to the *lava-lava* of Fiji, and allied to the *sulu* of New Caledonia. Most of them are lolling or squatting in a shed by the beach, and a cheery *eorana* is uttered by tiny children, even—a form of salutation combining "good morning" with all kinds of earthly blessings, and hearty good wishes for the stranger. Little Tinomana looks with love and wants a present.

What a panorama, what a tableau of tropic beauty, as one leisurely walks round Avarua; now along the main road, and then up a pleasing byway! The picture is like some poet's dream. The cocoa palms, laden with nuts to breaking strain, are rustling in the trade wind in a continuous and surging cadence, and the frayed fronds of the giant banana quiver soft music in a minor key. What a lush of the tropics! Yonder are paw-paws and waving sugar-cane; while orange-trees laden, mango and breadfruit trees come in as a sort of



background. There the broad leaves of the taro and the spiny frondlets of the pine-apple. Near graceful Indian bamboos, with their striped and yellow stems, are crotons, dracenas, bigonias, and acalyphas, resplendent in variegated colouring, and clustered around is the giant verbena. The *sida retusa* runs all amuck, a very weed amongst the rest, yet useful for hemp-making, if people but knew it.

“Now, Wragge,” says our companion, “put your note-book aside, and give it a rest.”

“Impossible,” we answer; “pencil and paper one must have, they are faithful friends to every traveller. Scientific men are generally queer, eccentric, or whatever else you like to call it; got a screw loose, you know. Pardon one’s follies. Sir Joseph Hooker set the example. Wherever the good old botanist went he carried a pencil tied to the wrist, and note-book secured by a lanyard to his neck, lest valuable items should slip the memory.”

There is the gorgeous yellow allamanda in full flower, the purple duranta, and trumpet lily; various kinds of acacia, and the great rich flowers of hibiscus in many species. Could Eve have wished reinstatement in a fairer Eden? And all among this glorious tangle are the happy natives, their faces beaming with the essence of good-will.

See yon pretty native girl, scarce fourteen, wishing for a sweetheart who will give her a fourpenny brooch or a cheap accordion.

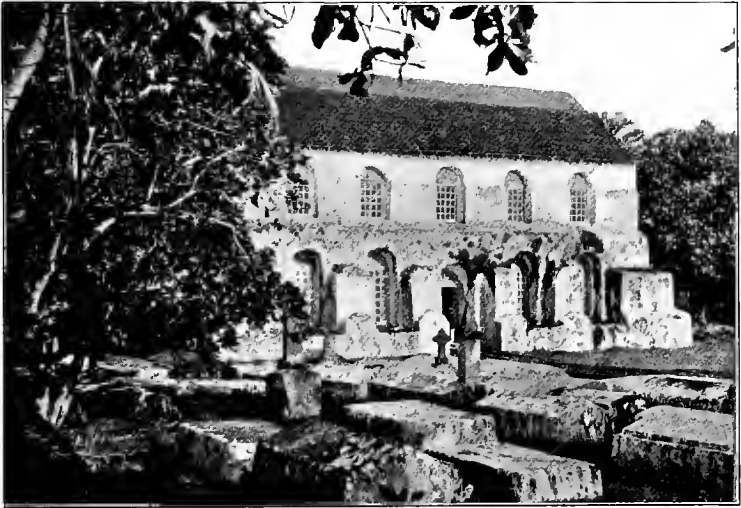
Small Chilian ponies, fowls, pigeons, cats, and the ubiquitous pig, which is treated as a member of the family, and may even, it is said, be suckled at the human breast, make up the heterogeneous multitude, while buggies and bicycles go briskly along.

We hasten on along the circular road, passing water hyacinth in great luxuriance—another pest, by the way, beautiful though

it is. A bevy of gaily attired and semi-nude school children, all unconscious of indecency, form an admiring escort.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whatever is that massive, repulsive-looking building on the right, looking like a *bâtiment* of some French prison, with those ugly whitewashed walls just relieved by the strange



[G. R. Crummer, photo.]

PROTESTANT CHURCH WITH TOMBS, BAROTONGA.

quivering foliage of the Australian *casuarina*, and the rich red flower-petals of the *poinsettia*, or coral tree?

Verily it's a Protestant Church, and round about it is a history. We by no means decry all church-going. It touches sympathetic chords in the mutual aspirations of aggregated souls, and should tend to make humanity realize their *unity* with the Mind Divine. But, then, there are churches and churches, services and services, as there are Christians and

*Christians*; and surely it's needless to worship the Infinite and sound a *Te Deum* to the Master of the Universe in *this* gruesome-looking place! Rather should we carol beneath the palm trees, and find a sermon in every leaf.

All God's Nature so lavish around utters a protest against the monstrosity.

A graveyard surrounds the hideous pile with ghastly tombs, repellent and grim. No grassy mounds o'er dust beloved, telling of life and eternal spring—the perennial Oneness of all that is—but hulky piles in crude cement, typical of the silence of eternal gloom, and introduced by the missionaries of the Lutheran sect. Catholic graves may be decked with flowers.

We enter. Just by the door are the cardinal points laid in the floor in dark-ribbed wood. Old-fashioned galleries and high, dark pew-benches show up the more the lime-daubed sides, and the whole is well calculated to impress the simple-minded native with the terrors and penalties of “mortal sin” in a land where such was once unknown. Sin came along with rum and the gin-bottle. Then grew jealousies, factions, and feuds, sown by the gardeners to Jesus Christ. Of these, alas! there is ample evidence. We have barely been ashore for one brief hour, yet people have talked and canards fly with reference to sundry religious squabbles; while during the interim Earth has travelled along her orbit 67,000 miles, and on with the sun through the Milky Way thousands of leagues in the yawning depths of Immortal Immensity.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leaving the church, we visit Makea, Queen of Rarotonga. She has, in fact, the most power, owns the land, and presides with grace over the native court, over which rule, beside the queen, three chiefs or *ariki*s, Kinuku, Tinomana, and Pa. If a dispute cannot be settled by them, it goes to the High



Court, in which Colonel Gudgeon, the Government Resident, is judge. Makea, we hear, is just and reasonable with every case. Once did feeling override her reason, that was when her husband was a naughty boy—kissed a young and pretty girl, that's all; for which offence, report saith, he was promptly sent to another isle to mend his ways and ruminate on wrong.

The laws of New Zealand are, however, being gradually worked into the jurisdiction of the island by Colonel Gudgeon with commendable policy—amended to circumstances, the habits of the people, and island life.

The queen adorns her bungalow with pictures of royalties and notabilities, for which she has a great *penchant*.

A native boy, bedecked with a wreath of pandanus fruit, smelling most deliciously, shows the way to royal quarters. On the broad verandah of her bungalow, all covered with the rich orange flowers of the trailing *tecoma venusta*, sits the queen, a stately dame of some fifteen stone.

We cannot but think that could she inhabit the planet Mars, her weight would be reduced to that of a boat-race coxswain—that she might move herself about by an effort of will and have a nervous system like an electric battery. But she is all unconscious of other worlds than ours, thinks this Earth is anchored by interminable roots to an infernal abyss, and is happy in the knowledge that she is a queen. A blue print dress, spotted with white, covers the body, with no sign of underclothing in a warm climate. On state occasions the gown is more imposing.

An attendant, with great deference and hat in hand, ushers us into the presence, and we are gracefully and generously received. She speaks but little English, and is content that we praise her land, pay our respects, and indicate a loyal devotion to native royalty.

Makea reminds one of Liliuokalani, ex-Queen of Hawaii, whom we once met at Honolulu. Pleased with our visit, she cordially shakes hands, and so adieu. Her very presence commands respect, nay, even love; and that her dusky subjects do love her, combined with fear, there is no doubt—fear, because she has, it is said, the “evil eye,” and can work mischief untold on those who displease her. Should she say to an offending subject, “Away! I wish to see you no more,” accompanied by a basilisk look, off goes the wretched creature to sicken and die forthwith. Such is the power of hypnotic suggestion on the native mind.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Referring again to the existing Government of the Cook Islands, we are informed that it works infinitely better than did the old missionary *régime*.

Many give information in reply to queries; and, if we may here allude to the question of native morality, readers will understand that it is done straightforwardly, as in duty bound, to give an insight into the manners of this simple people, whose main statutes are in the code of Nature. It is well known to travellers that what is deemed wrong in one country is thought right in another; and the maxim that applies is *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. Change of latitude governs a people by inexorable decree as the flora and fauna of the land; and climate, as a resultant, is a powerful factor.

But the missionaries of old failed to recognize these principles, and adopted a *régime* suited to those of Calvinistic and puritanical persuasion, fit for latitude 55 degrees, or “Greenland’s icy mountains,” instead of the seductive tropics. They sought to educate the Rarotongans to their own code of propriety, and miserably failed.

No wonder the warm-blooded people resented such rules as the following. For instance, if in the old time a love-sick



[G. R. Crummer, photo.]

MAKEA, QUEEN OF RAROTONGA.

youth walked 'neath the palm trees by night with his *fiancée*, he must needs carry a palm leaf torch lest "impropriety" should be suspected. What utter bunkum! If a man was discovered crying on the grave of a woman, other than that of a wife married in the orthodox church, the fine for such an offence against morals was a bar of *soap*, representing five dollars—quite a little fortune to some natives, poor in cash, but genial in nature.

For other offences, which need not be mentioned here, heavier fines were imposed; but this code has since been repealed, to a considerable extent, by a more enlightened rule, suited to the geographical conditions of the country and common law of a once "barbarous" people, if provisionally we may use such an adjective.

Fines for "little sins" are, however, still inflicted on the natives by the queen and her *arikis*, or chiefs. Does one indulge in a village scandal, the libelled one summons the slanderer to appear before Makea and Ariki Pa, who may inflict a fine even to £8, and the old maxim fully applies, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel."

Suppose a woman wears a special dress trimmed with *guipure* or of unique pattern. "What then?" you ask. Well, suppose another follows the example and walks through the village in a costume similar. The former, if jealous, takes offence, goes to Makea and lays complaint, whereupon the latter is promptly fined and made to pay for the imitative instinct. If the amount is not forthcoming, the one convicted works it out by repairing the roads, or by humping coral for lime, cleaning Makea's yard, or cutting up bandages for the little hospital; and the work is reckoned at a shilling a day, so that the maximum penalty with cash at zero practically means five months' hard labour. Sundays are not counted.

But rumour saith that a case of prohibited whisky (if such can be got) may be made to compound an offence; whether or not, let the reader judge.

There is little or no family life in a European sense, and conjugal fidelity is a minus quantity. The whole forms one big family; and therein, sectionally, the ties are strong. Even ere a child is born it is amply provided for, generally by adoption. In fact, the adopting of children in Rarotonga, as elsewhere in the Pacific, is a frequent and honoured practice. Thus a child may speak of its fathers, meaning the natural father and the feeding father.

Can it be that these islanders have solved the ever-perplexing social question? The command to our “first parents” is fully acted upon, and, judging by the number of bonny little brown skins at every turn, there is no fear of a declining birth-rate so much deplored in Australia. Half-castes are considered as favours from God, and are treated with profound respect.

\* \* \* \* \*

We visit next a native house, passing heavy lime-washed walls surrounding the royal compounds and sundry massive tombs of the island ancestry, away past twining pumpkins, blue “pimpernel” (*tradescantia* \*), and the red oleander in fullest flower, contrasting with the yellow of the ever-present acacia.

Yonder flies the British ensign!

Pretty dusky girls, with liquid eyes so soft and brown, welling up volumes from their very depths, join in a hearty *eorana*, and think no harm. Freely they offer cocoanuts, bananas, and oranges.

Threading our way along a narrow path through a maze of the wondrous tropical growth, shown off to perfection by

\* Also called *commelina*—fam. *commelinaceæ*.

the towering hills beyond, we reach a coral strand, all bleached and white, surrounding the thatched hut we are approaching. The humpy is about ten feet high by fifteen long and ten broad. The walls are bamboo sticks deftly interwoven, the floor of coral, and the roof of palm leaves. A few low bedsteads are placed around, on which are laid layers of lovely mats woven from sugar-cane, palm, or pandanus. No partition or curtain is there; the apartment is common to the family in the perfect innocence of Eve ere the apron. Big chests of camphor wood make up the furniture, with a sewing-machine in the corner, while from end to end of the interior stretches a clothes-line hung with pants and shirts in diver colours and many patches.

We receive a cordial welcome. Sitting on mats covering the coral floor are the women, in those simple sacques or loose print dresses so typical of the Eastern Pacific. Natua is dexterously weaving a hat from bamboo fibre or sugar-cane, light as the proverbial feather; Taae fans Teiho, her half-caste lover. A hat can be bought for from 3s. to 30s., depending on the size and fineness of the plaiting; mats may cost 10s. to £1. And then the native baskets, called *puti*, are real works of art, made of pandanus chiefly, and interwoven with the bark of the *fei*, or mountain banana, stained black and red according to taste. Such are used for holding food-supplies and clothing, and 5s. to 10s. will purchase one.

Other native "houses" are of the same type.

The outskirts of the township are traversed by channels of creeks covered with volcanic rock, showing the steam-holes, brought down by the currents from the mountains.

We take a track leading to a fertile valley, and wander on amid vanilla and coffee plantations, and guavas and pine-apples all run riot. Oranges grow wild, the foliage of the banana towers full thirty feet, and the air is thick with the

scent of plumeria. Delicate land-shells\* are found under lava stones, fresh-water mollusca † in the streams, and butterflies and moths of rare varieties and exquisite dragonflies delight the soul of the lover of Nature. Anon one hears the grunt of a pig rooting amid fallen cocoanuts, and then the dulcet voice of a raven-haired damsel as she combs out her tresses by the babbling brook.

Everywhere trailing on the ground is the blue-flowered *tradescantia*, used largely for feeding stock; the purple ageratum, so prized in European gardens, is here a weed; so is the small sensitive acacia, with its nodules of purple flowers—the leaves recoil and fold up at the slightest touch. Beautiful mosses, lichens, and delicate ferns are there too, with soft-leaved grasses fine as on the “Field of Ardath,” while huge lilies stretch their snow-white petals ’neath a very “Bower of Venus,” and the blue clitoria hangs limp from yon fence.

Typical island stores adorn the principal thoroughfare, where can be purchased the flimsy bright dresses that little Tepairu loves so well as a gift from her sweetheart, with New Zealand meats, Tasmanian jams, Petone flannels, and a thousand and one things, from a needle to an anchor, that make up the *summum bonum* of Pacific life. The old German trader who bids us “Good day” wonders if we are going to remain and deal with him. “I gif you dree months’ credit; effery poddy down here pay each dree month.” Credit is the custom, and spot cash from any but passing strangers would cause universal astonishment. Crummer’s beautiful photographs, real gems, can be bought here.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hotels! there are none; but excellent accommodation can be had at the house of a well-known coprah merchant, named Taylor.

\* *Stenogyra octona* (see Appendix).

† Species of *Melania* (see Appendix).

We visit him next, and make the acquaintance of his charming young wife, and advise all coming this way to do likewise, and take tiffin in their bijou bungalow.

Note the double-latticed verandah with narrow outside venetians to the windows, painted in light blue picked out in white, giving a charming result against the foliage of the palm trees.

When we say that Mrs. Taylor is a most pleasing hostess of island origin, who would outshine many in Belgravia, one cannot speak louder or more truly in her worthy praise.

Behold the interior of a Rarotongan villa! What pretty rooms! What exquisite taste! Choice native mats, blending delicately with strips of rich carpet, are in delightful litter on the broad floors—cast at random, but just where effect is best. Wreaths and fibres of bamboo and cocoanut adorn the walls, with a few choice pictures neatly worked in. Quilts of patchwork in bright colours and of quaint designs, wrought to fit with artificer's precision, cover the beds; and here we notice that telling little maxim with a load of meaning, "He prayeth best that loveth best."

But the *chef-d'œuvre* of this tropic home-nest is a painting of our hostess in native bridal attire. A chaplet of gardenia and garlands of flowers surround the head and fall in festoons almost to the waist, while neatly poised behind the ear is the familiar hibiscus blossom. No wonder that Taylor is a devoted husband! Lucky man! Thrice blessed!

Behold the contrast! Awaiting outside is a clergyman of the "Church of God"—all churches should be such—a Seventh Day Adventist, a fellow-passenger and an estimable man, acting up to his lights, for whom we entertain profound respect. But we cannot but compare his sombre garb, black wide-awake hat, grey locks, and clerical umbrella with a big crook handle, typical of the shepherd, with the amazing lavish beauty on all





[*F. Homes, photo., Papeete.*

TEPAIRU, A PURE-CASTE RAROTONGAN GIRL.

sides around us. He strives to instil into our dull brain that the Sabbath begins at sunset at the site of Eden in longitude 42° E., that all time should be reckoned from thence, and the Greenwich date abolished. He has come hither from religious Maoriland to proselytise the natives; whether he will succeed, and make them believe that "Napoleon was Anti-Christ," is another matter. Imagine a sea-captain dating from Eden!

We cannot see it, and prefer to follow Taylor to his coprah shed. There we find some 14,000 nuts all ready for the splitting and drying process. When thoroughly dried, the nut is gouged out and becomes the article of commerce whence the oil is extracted.

A cocoanut palm begins to bear when about eight years old and 25 feet high. What would the Pacific Islander do without this useful tree? It provides him with food; "milk" for drink, oil for lighting and medicine—an excellent remedy for aches and pains—material for house-building, pile-driving, and thatching, husks for fuel and charcoal, fibre for rope and dressmaking, leaves for canoe sails, and nutshells and roots for utensils. Next to it, in utility, comes the "bourau," or hibiscus tree (*H. tiliaceus*), which may attain a height of 40 feet. This also affords fibre, and the wood is largely used in making rafters and walls for houses and knees for boats.

\* \* \* \* \*

Longing to see more, we take a buggy and drive along the circular road, right round the island, accompanied by a friend whose home is here.

A tiny pony, of Chilian ancestry, trots along at a rattling speed, and in less than three hours we do the entire tour, 21 miles—on and away past palms and pandanus, mapé trees and barringtonias with their splendid foliage; Catholic chapels here, and the Betelas and Zionas of the Lutherans there—more ugly churches, heavy with limewash. Why! one

would positively think that the innocent natives needed more saving than the hoodlums and larrikins of the London streets.

On and onward—and the plucky little pony plugs away—now through a sandbank o'erhung with casuarinas and bordering the beach; then, helter-skelter, along the white sandy road, formed by the sweat of many a Rarotongan fined by the missionaries for some harmless flirtation. There are girls washing in a little river, and rubbing the clothes on lava stones.

Great patches of wild coleus are on this side and that, and cluster by the coral dykes, their warm rich leaves setting off the pale green of the waving bananas towering above.

Panoramas of ocean with exquisite tints reflecting the colours of the solar spectrum, and vistas of the mountains with their volcanic aiguilles rapidly alternate; then come plantations—taro and tobacco—peeps of canoes hauled on the shore with nets and lines drying, and stretched for the evening fishing.

Oh, 'tis a bonny drive! Now over a clear mountain stream, then past charcoal pits and burning cocoa husks.

The lazy blue crane wings its flight as we tear along, land-crabs scoot and hurry to their holes, while bright-eyed girls and genial men shout their *eoranas* in many a village, with the best of good wishes surging through an atmosphere heavy with the scent of the tropical flowers.

But 'mid all this life there's the presence of "death." Long rows of those gruesome limed tombs, constructed of coral and native cement, line the wayside right round the island. Burying the dead along by the road is a native custom, many preferring it to the gloomy churchyard. They like the idea—parsons and prudery notwithstanding—think that the bodies of beloved ones are not *quite* adrift from the casual blessing of the passer-by. Corpses are even buried in the gardens, close to the houses, so that the ashes of the cherished "gone" may yet

be present ; and the grave is sheltered by an iron roof lest rain should fall ere the Resurrection. The hideous tombs, it must be remembered, were introduced by the old Lutheran missionaries ; but if the deceased was a member of the more recent Catholic Church, garlands of frangipanni flowers, hibiscus and jasmine are laid on them with tenderest care, and kept renewed from day to day. Now, who dare call these people " savage " ? Our church is the cathedral of God in Nature ; but we state unhesitatingly that Catholicism has brightened " the beyond," and Protestantism depressed it in this fair isle of the South Pacific.

In parts the strip 'twixt the road and the sea is one natural rockery. Great blocks of coral limestone jut boldly up, jagged and twisted in grotesque shapes by plutonic upheaval from Earth's crust ; and all among them, clustering in the crevices and sticking to the trees, are magnificent specimens of the *asplenium nidus* and other ferns, orchids and lichens in the wildest profusion 'mid candle-nut trees and cocoanuts on all sides. Could English gardeners just behold it !

The great bougainvillæa, covering yon bungalow in a lavish sheen of gorgeous purple, is here accounted a patrician plant ; only Makea and her *ariki*s among the natives are considered entitled to it.

" See these iron-wood trees ? " says our companion, pointing to a clump of quaint casuarinas. " Believe they call 'em shea oaks in Australia ; anyhow, name or no name, here they're a constant source of trouble." " How so ? " we ask, all eager for knowledge. " Well, you see, it's this way : Makea has fads, and one of them is the iron-wood. She has taken the tree under regal protection, and the natives prefer it for building canoes. Woe to the man should he cut one down if that he selects is the queen's *tabu* ; just a glance from the 'evil eye,' and another grave is added to the list."

Chatting together one learns a lot.



[G. R. Crummer, photo.]

THE JETTY, AVARUA, RAROTONGA.

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Bird life is most meagre, and this is especially striking on our drive round the island. Hence the insect pests in the absence of birds. In other islands of the Pacific the "Mina," or Molucca thrush, has been introduced to keep them down, and with most happy results; but our friend tells us that the Government Resident of the Cook Islands fears to try the experiment, lest the birds should destroy the fruit. "If insect-eating birds are not soon introduced," says our companions, "the pests will ruin us."

To the conchologist the outlying reefs, with their amazing caverns of coral and glorious colours, will afford ample research apart from the land-shells found in the hills.

Time soon flies. We are back in Avarua, and hark! there goes the first whistle. So to the *Taviuni*, and good-bye, Rarotonga!

Would we could have seen more and done more! One friend says, "Stop till the next boat; the climate is the best in the Pacific, beats Tahiti, and you'll enjoy the mountains." But no, not this time; the thermometer may, indeed, never fall below 65 degrees or rise above 87 degrees,—that even temperature is characteristic of a tropical island.

"Talking of the Rarotongan climate," continues he, "look at old John Snow, a man who has been fifty-three years on the island, and is now eighty-eight years old; so don't think you'll die if you stop with us. True, we had measles a short while ago, but the steamer brought those along from New Zealand." We venture to suggest that the spell of dry weather coincident with the solar minimum was the cause; however that may be, there is no doubt that Rarotonga is remarkably healthy.

"And the natives," he goes on as we reach the jetty, "the more you see of them, the more you'll like them. They are most good-hearted, honest, and always courteous, and will never presume unless you 'allow yourself to go,' as the saying



is; their one fault is want of backbone, and they have little strength of character. Sunday is their gala day. They've been so flabbergasted with sectarian strife that they've given it best, get drunk on bush beer, and no prohibition and no threats of hell fire can stop them.”

“Don't blame 'em. But can't stay, old man; bound for Tahiti, you know. Come back some day. Good-bye! God bless you!”

## CHAPTER III

Rarotonga to Raiatea: A Stirring Incident—A Volatile Woman—The Immortal Universe—The Trader's Story—A "Romance of the Antimeridian"—Religious Squabbles—Hold on to your Greenwich Date—Pastor and Priest—Christians, Awake!—Two Sundays a Week—Smoking-room Orators—Missionaries—Manchester Slums and Pacific Islands—The Recording Angel—The "Great Awakening"—*Ad Veritatem per Scientiam.*

"HEAVE away there!" and off we go. How we love the sea; its freedom, its grandeur, its intense fascination! How the chanties of middy days haunt the mind! A trivial circumstance recalls one at once:—

"Good-bye! lady, good-bye! lady,  
I'm bound to leave you now.  
*Chorus.*—Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along;  
Merrily we roll along,  
Across the bright blue sea."

What is that commotion by the taffrail? Why that native woman straining her eyes shorewards, wringing her hands and sobbing so bitterly?

"Her husband!" says one. "Look at him in the water!"

Sure enough, there is a man swimming for dear life. Now, the natives are great inter-island travellers; if they can raise a pound, away they go to Raiatea or Tahiti to see friends, or just for the pleasure of the trip. And the *Taviuni* is laden with them. The main deck is strewed with mats, *parius*, and baskets; and girls and babies, breadfruit and cocoanuts are

all over the place, blocking up the smoking-room to the disgust of Major Umphank, whose nose resents island odours.

But what is the trouble?

The man came aboard to see off his wife, and while yet fondling and crying over her, as natives will, the anchor was up and the ship under way. No money for passage, a sudden plunge and a dash for the beach. Already, when he leaped, the steamer was a mile off.

“Will he land?” thinks the wife; “be seized by sharks, or dashed to pieces on the cruel coral?”

’Tis an exciting time; the breakers are rolling in seething fury over the reef, which the man, who is a powerful swimmer, is now approaching. The woman wails on in keenest anguish, and all feel for her.

“Give us the glasses,” says the steward. “Heavens! he is in the breakers now. Look! he is swimming aside with all his might.”

Mercy! A big wave bears him on the crest and he is over; shallow water now and walking ashore. The wife, who sees it all, sighs in relief, dries her tears and combs her hair. Then to her mat, another lover comes forward to console her for the rest of the voyage, and is accepted forthwith; so all’s well that ends well.

Such is an example of island fidelity, of the volatile disposition of the people. They fall in and out of love, corresponding with latitude, as evenly as the diurnal range of the barometer in their own tropics.

“We must insist on the seventh commandment being kept, or the natives will never become good Adventists,” says our shepherd with the crook-umbrella.

“The missionaries, sir, will never be successful till they become less bigoted,” answers another passenger; “till they show a little more of the *true* Christian spirit among themselves

and are more tolerant of native customs. I know a bit about these South Seas—been trading for many a year. Come, and I'll tell you a yarn; true bill all the same. Come on!"

\* \* \* \* \*

We follow to the smoking-room, hear the trader's story from start to finish, take copious notes, and now reproduce it, pieced together with our own comments. Happily our shepherd had gone to bed.

The island it refers to had better not be named, neither shall we mention any individual. The religious sects have done good work among the natives in a certain fashion—that we *fully* admit—and in so far as their teaching elevates and ennobles, they deserve every support; but all right-minded people will deplore religious squabbles over mere bagatelles, and the bad example set thereby by ministers of that Christ in whom we, too, believe, and whose Gospel is Unsectarian Love and Universal Brotherhood, and will condemn the teaching of ignorance for TRUTH than which there is no higher religion.

Well, a rumpus occurred as a matter of fact between pastor and priest, all, forsooth, about a question of geographical position on this planet Earth, beyond which time is not, where "above," "below," "north, south, east and west," have no meaning in the fathomless depths of an Immortal Cosmos—where all is harmony in the bosom of the Infinite.

Let us predicate a little. For years unmolested a certain Lutheran missionary was without a rival. For years had been preached "original sin," and the appalling doctrine of everlasting damnation inherited by the action of an inquisitive woman whose alleged descendants are in reality of a stock older by 794,000 years than the supposed mother of the human race.

"The natives," said the trader, "shivered in very fright, and questioned the justice of having been born."

Recognizing only the glories of a bounteous Nature, with a Spirit of Good at the helm of all, they asked in their innocence, “Can these things be?”

To church, however, they *had* to go by the queen’s command, for with a policy as cute as it was subtle, the officiating pastor had netted Tetua, the dusky potentate of that once peaceful isle, on the principle enunciated in the trite maxim, “Get but the queen, and the swarm will follow.”

So things went on. The missionary knew more of “Tophet” and of “Jasper Streets” than of Norie’s Navigation; as for the rest, it never entered his head that this little world of “sin and sorrow” is itself but an atom in the Great Beyond, swirling in infinite heaven, with milliards of others trillions of leagues from our Solar System.

He could not realize that each individual member of his flock was indeed a citizen of the “City of God.” The people were never taught that they are sparks—nay, the very essence—of an Electric and Eternal Dynamo, and that He would never damn molecules of Himself; never taught that each one is a vital part of the Great Integral Whole; but girls were fined in bars of *soap*, and the dogma proclaimed that an innocent babe dying unbaptized would—Well! well! well!

Architect of the Universe, was *that* the way to proselytize a supposed savage race—that the way to ennoble them and make them recognize their *oneness* with God and the Unity of all things!

Of terrestrial longitude nothing was known; and the good old maxim, “Hold on to your Greenwich date,” had never been heard of.

Thus it was that for years past the excellent missionary (and his predecessors) had kept Sunday on the real Saturday, for mathematical geography was not his forte; of the anti-meridian he knew nothing whatever.

At last a priest from Tahiti came along, versed in the Nautical Almanac and the cunning ways of 180 degrees.

"*Sancta Maria!*" exclaimed the Father, "*quelle ignorance profonde; here must we found de one true Church!*"

He sought out Tetua.

"Pardon, madame; j'ai l'honneur de vous saluer."

The queen was lying in an old print dress, resting in the noonday on an island mat. She raised her eyes with a look of astonishment.

"Tiens! interprète, expliquez immédiatement," exclaimed the priest, beckoning his acolyte, who was versed in native, French and English.

"Madame," said he, "you have greatly sinned. You are keeping Sunday on the Jewish sabbath; you do not observe even Christmas Day. Good Friday, I find, is quite a dead letter. Fête de Pâques, have you never heard

of Easter? Who, may I ask, is your spiritual guide? *Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*" continued he, "*mais—how in ze name of all de saints do you and your people expect to be saved?*"

Tetua, amazed, sent for the missionary.

"Here is anti-Christ," said she; "I pray you, defend me from the wiles of Satan."

"Be not alarmed, good queen," said the pastor. "The Lord is mindful of His own; keep the true Sabbath, and no harm shall come to thee. As for this fellow," said he, pointing to the priest, "he is anti-Christ indeed, and a parcel of lies."



[F. Homes, photo.]

TETUA.

“Sapristi ! c’est vous qui êtes menteur,” retorted the Father in great agitation. “Corpus Christi ! je demande à l’instant l’audience du Gouverneur ; ze Dimanche must be kept on le propre jour.”

“Madame, I assure you,” protested the missionary to Tetua, “if Sunday is changed, the curse of the Almighty will fall on this place, whether by earthquake, fire, or tempest——”

“Parbleu !” said the priest. “I too have a mission, and mine is de Holy Catholic Church. Où est le Gouverneur ?”

The place was protected by a European Power, hence the question.

Now, the gallant gentleman who had presided over the destinies of that island since the Protectorate had been proclaimed was sitting in his bungalow, peacefully smoking the sweet old briar that delighted his soul, and twirling, meditatively, his huge moustache.

“It’s a charming spot,” thought he, “but the life’s too dull. Now for a square gin ! Why, damn it all, if they start prohibition here as they have in the Cook Islands, even *I* must set the example, and take my nip just here on the quiet. Who the thunder’s this ?” said he, as the priest approached all alone, and demanded an interview.

The nature of the dispute was quickly explained.

“Bless my soul,” said the Governor, “why, to tell you the truth, Father, I haven’t bothered my head—had no time to go into dates ; but doubtless you are right, Father, doubtless you are right ; this place is in west longitude. For the moment I forget the position. Where’s Mercator’s Chart ?”

A sleek little native quickly fetched it.

“Hum,” mumbled he, twisting his dividers, “171 degrees,\* odd, West ! That means that Greenwich time is ahead of us

\* The geographical position in west longitude has been purposely altered.

by eleven hours and twenty-four minutes; Sunday evening in Europe is Sunday morning here, that's clear enough!"

"And le peuple dey s'appelle le Monday," said the priest, lost in the mazes of the English language; "et le missionnaire, he do say all right, c'est le Monday aussi. Il est comme fou! He vill not change."

"Stuff and nonsense!" answered the Governor. "He and all of us have been keeping Eastern time, and we are wrong, sure enough. Merci, monsieur, pour votre service; the proper day shall be observed, mon père, and representations made to the Home Government. A short Act, I think, should meet the case."

The Lutheran Church was up in arms, the Seventh Day Adventists were panic-stricken on discovering that they had been breaking the Sabbath after all, and were still keeping Friday instead of Saturday.

The missionary, when he heard of the Governor's decision, was furious, and further anathemas were hurled from the pulpit. Finding his Excellency was obdurate, he 'bouted ship, begged, implored, "went on his knees"—so the trader said—but all to no purpose.

At length the Act became law, defining Sunday on the true longitudinal day.

The change was made at Christmas time, hence two Christmas Days were observed, the Lutheran and the Catholic, and sectarian jealousy waxed bitterer than ever. The first was as dull and gloomy as Commination Day; no "Herald Angels" came that way, and carols were deemed as songs of the devil.

"Christians, awake, salute the happy morn!" Pshaw! the irony of it! They need to "awake" in all good earnest, and a big rouse out there'll be some day, that's sure enough!

Then came the Catholic Christmas. Their church had been



started with great *éclat*, and *Adeste Fidéles* echoed through the building. The music-loving natives hummed it outside, tried it on accordions, and converts to Rome were added to the fold.

But inasmuch as religious tolerance was practised in that palm-clad isle of the great Pacific, the missionary persisted in



[G. R. Crummer, photo.]

TYPICAL CATHOLIC CHURCH ON A PACIFIC ISLAND.

observing Sunday on Saturday ; the Adventists adopted the real date, and kept their Saturday on the Lutheran Sunday ; the priest kept his Sunday on the Protestant Monday.

The consequence was there were two Sundays, and meantime the natives “sat on a rail,” daily expecting the vengeance of God.

But as nothing happened, save a freshening of the trade wind, due to the sun’s increasing northing, they hied them to

the mountains and brewed bush beer till many got drunk, muddled in the mysteries of the Christian religion.

“And that is all?” chimes in one, as smoke goes wreathing from many a pipe.

“No,” says the trader; and to quote his words, “The missionary next insulted the Catholics by circulating a pamphlet among his sheep, wherein he proclaimed the frailty of the Virgin, who counselled the Christ to turn water into wine—*alias* beer, a species thereof. Naturally enough, the Catholics retaliated, and later on burnt Protestant Bibles in Fiji, whither the news must evidently have spread.”

At last, and at length, all tired of strife, and finding his minority steadily increasing, the Lutheran yielded as best he could; the anti-meridian scored a triumph, and the Greenwich date became duly established.

Such is a tale of Holy Church in the South Pacific. “A true bill, gentlemen, I assure you,” adds the trader, as he knocks the ashes from his pipe, and sends a squirt into the spittoon.

“Great Master Eternal, and *that* is Christianity!” one exclaims.

“We had trouble in Rarotonga, too,” says another fellow; “all the Protestant churches kept Sunday on Saturday, the Catholics only observed the right date. Two Sundays were observed, for a year at least, in Avarua, to my knowledge, till the thing became so intolerable in trading circles, and especially when the steamer called on those days, that the Government interfered and set matters right.”

“Tell you what it is, boys,” resumes the trader, “religion’s only a business now-a-days, as anything else is a business. The ‘Almighty Dollar’ rules the world. The parsons out here have the best houses, and live on the fat of the land—one of ’em made a fortune by a bit of sharp practice in an

island I could name—and nine-tenths don't believe what they preach.”

“Believe it or not, but it's true all the same,” he goes on, “a missionary in another island strung girls up by the thumbs to make them confess their lovers; but that was in the old days, and things are altered now. My word! if Christ came back, there'd be many a ‘scourge of small cords.’ When you come across an honest parson in these times, who believes what he preaches in his *innermost soul* and really tries to follow Christ, mind you, he's like a good Paumotu pearl shell, and commands respect. Just take my tip: if you want to get rich, start some sect and put up a church; get hold of a lot of women as your trump card—if a native queen, so much the better—persuade them you are sent by God to proclaim a special mission, and if you manœuvre so that they'll trust you, I'll guarantee that in five years you'll be worth £10,000. Good night, all; I'm agoin' to turn in.”

“Look here,” says a young fellow from a Lancashire House, and a Wrangler of Cambridge, who had fallen out with his father, “my business in the print trade takes me all over the South Seas, and up to Bonin as well, and I know a thing or two. Talk about sending missionaries to the Pacific! Why, the islanders are infinitely more moral than many in our big



[F. Homcs, photo.]

TAAROA.

cities ; they lead natural lives, and therefore healthy and harmonious ones—Q.E.D., as we used to say at Trinity—and can give us points, I can tell you. Their maxim is, ‘Be happy, and you will be virtuous.’ Free *v.* Bond, I call it. Look at the horrors of a Manchester slum, at the poor little devils that pine even for a ray of sunshine, at the mites in the factories that earn half a crown a week, and send sixpence to ‘Uncle Toby’ to give the others a day in the country, and contrast *that* state of things with a South Sea village, its sweet content, pure air, free life, and the cocoanuts. I say better keep the missionaries and parsons in England, where every mother’s son of them is wanted ; there’s quite enough work for them there and to spare, if they’ll only *do* it, leave tea-parties and tennis alone, and send the carpet slippers to the poor-house.”

“Go it gently, old chap,” says a fellow in the corner, blowing a wreath ; “my father was a parson, and he was a good man, and earnest too.”

“I quite believe you, but I will *not* be stopped,” is the reply ; “that yarn of our friend has touched me up and made my blood boil. And I’m not referring now to individuals, but to the average parson of the new century. The clergy and lay-clerics of the present day don’t rightly understand the *meaning* of Christianity, and may do more harm than good by their absurd bickerings and petty prejudices, especially out here in the South Pacific. I tell you the natives don’t understand it, and fail to reconcile conflicting dogmas, as every white man with *nous* about him who comes this way can see for himself ; and Christ and His creed are positively brought into disrepute. Why ! if parsons must go gallivanting about the world, let ’em go to Sydney, and help the poor dossers in the Domain, instead of leaving all the real work to the Salvation Army. I tell you, gentlemen, there’s a screw loose—the clergy of the

present day are ‘all to leeward,’ as the captain would say, and want pulling up ‘with a running bowline.’ It’s high time the world woke up, and demanded action that will satisfy the people. Take even the Church of England. I was brought up in it, and dearly love it for its *own* sake, but I never went after leaving college; the sermons are as skilful and science is ignored. There are exceptions, and thank God for it, though in many places it’s church no longer, but a plaza of fashion, and a lawyer’s forum breeding ‘ritual inquiries’ and ‘Royal Commissions.’ The Low Church party condemn the ritualist for ‘illegal practices,’ while they in turn complain that ‘rubrical commands’ are neglected, and such-like twaddle; and vital issues are seldom thought of, the Divinity of Man is never preached, and Christ is mocked at Calvary again. And all the time the masses are starving for food for soul and food for body, asking bread and getting stones. Where will red letters, blue, and black come in in the eternity of the Spirit? Can you tell me *that*? Let ’em leave dogma and ritual alone, and preach the Gospel of Common Humanity and God in all things. What *does* it matter whether they turn to the East or turn to the West, wear black gowns or gorgeous tunics! Let embroidered vestments be sold at auction for what they’ll fetch, and all the



[F. Homes, photo.]

TEIPO.

proceeds given to the poor. That's what Christ would order if He came along.

"I say, gentlemen," as all eyes are fixed upon him, "let the archbishops and the bishops give half their stipends to feed the starving multitudes, as Christ would have done; and more

too, brighten homes, and

practically practise what they teach, if they would

stave off a revolution and a revival upside down ;

that would be tuning the piano, it would ! Merciful

Heaven ! see all the wealth of St. Peter's ; and the

blind, halt, and maimed standing on the steps. Call

*that* Christianity ? " says he, with withering satire. "Look

at Father Damien — that's the kind of parson *I* believe

in, and the East End *padre* that nurses poor children.

Let them remember," he goes on, getting hotter, "that

charity begins at home, that's my notion ; let them learn generosity from the so-called

'heathen' of the Pacific ; they are as good as ourselves in all matters of blood, and in many respects far more civilized.

Think of Dr. Barnardo ! Now I'm off, too. Good night, everybody !"

THE SOUTHERN CROSS.

\* \* \* \* \*

A smug young steward puts out the lights as "six bells" strike ; we pace the deck, smoke another pipe, and think a lot.

The Southern Cross\* is sinking in the south-west, followed by the two bright “pointers” in Centaurus.

“Great God!” we exclaim, looking at our next and nearest sun, and remembering that his light takes four years to reach us, at the rate of 186,300 miles a second, “are we civilized after all? Is life on this earth real or unreal? What *does* it all mean? This endless preaching—are we the better for it? This terrible gulf ’twixt rich and poor—why should it be so?” Resting on the hatch, we seem to sleep. And a spirit form flying from Mars to Eros glances at Earth, and thus he says, “Oh, sorrowful planet, thy troubles are those of creative force, like to the pangs of a woman in travail. Thy people will evolve to a higher sphere, love shall prevail, poverty and wars come to an end—*ad veritatem per scientiam*—for PROGRESS is the Law of Immortality. The unseen is the real. An awakening there shall be that will stagger humanity; your ‘twentieth century’ shall see it, but all shall work together for good. Sins are mistakes, the finger-posts of experience through which souls must pass. So shall terrestrial man master ‘fate’ and fulfil his noble destiny. Yea, and verily, man shall rise to divine perfection even as he came forth from protoplasm—to grander conceptions of Everlasting Love, to a nobler idea of the Master Soul, all in Time where Time is not. *Te Deum! Benedicite!*”

\* \* \* \* \*

All next day, August 16th, squally weather continues; and natives feeling chilly are rolled in mats and blankets on the main deck to leeward. We pass the low island of Mitiero, over which a native pastor presides, and then signal H.M.S. *Clio*, bound southward from Tahiti.

The captain, chatting over afternoon tea, tells us that the

\* This famous constellation is here shown erect, as on the meridian above the pole, in order that readers may the better note the exact proportions of the principal stars.—C. L. W.

currents in this region are never the same for three trips together, keeping him ever on the *qui vive* ; that some years ago regular weather prevailed between Malden and Norfolk Islands, enabling good runs to be made, but that lately the winds have been all contrary. This can be explained by the physical condition of the sun respecting his maxima and minima periods in conjunction with lunar tides or the range of the moon's declination ; but we cannot enter further into this absorbing topic in this place.



## CHAPTER IV

Raiatea—A Poet's Dreamland—Squeaking Pigs and Lovely Girls—Jack Oldham—Pacific Life Unique—Flowers and Shells—Hurrah for Tahiti!—Native Passengers—Girl Mothers—Major Umphank and "Niggers"—Cocoa-nut Oil—Arrival at Papeete—Tahiti, at Last!—A Mooning Couple.

ANOTHER day is occupied in the run to Raiatea, and early in the morning the cloud-capped, jagged peaks and ribbed slopes of this beautiful island heave in sight. The highest mountain reaches 3389 feet.

As at Rarotonga, the cocoanuts, in belts, fringe the beach; and palm islets are scattered about, on which also thrive the odd-looking mangroves and quainter shea-oak, or *casuarina*.

Vast clouds of breaking spray burst over the outlying reefs; and crested wavelets, white as snow, fleck the ocean depths, contrasting with the intense blue of the water, the brown coral ridges, and areas of green sea in the shallows nearer shore.

What a tableau for a poet's dream! Forging steadily through the narrow passage, we bring up at the wharf.

Raiatea now belongs to France, but was not taken without serious opposition by the natives, during which many houses were burned and enmities aroused. They wanted the Union Jack, but the French gained the day.

What a picture for an artist does the wharf present! Squeaking pigs are being hauled from a boat for shipment; and women and girls with lovely flower-wreaths, red skirts, and

straw hats (mostly made of bamboo) mix with the men in gayest *pareus* or waist kerchiefs,—the prominent colours being blue, yellow, and red relieved in white. There's a gendarme, a dapper little Frenchman in white coat and brass buttons, his head almost smothered in a big white helmet, looking like a mannikin in a Martian hat.

“Ça, c'est drôle ça!” one cannot but exclaim.

Great piles of oranges on one side, cocoanut baskets on the other, catamarans are hove yonder on the strand; and the whole picture is one of intense good nature, animation, and love of life under a tropic sun, and amid surroundings of exquisite and novel beauty that impel one's soul to thank God for the joy of being in such a place and amongst such a generous, careless, and happy people.

Raiatea, by the natives, is considered sacred; in the mountains of the island are the mummied remains of kings and queens.

Old Jack Oldham, minus a leg, is among the throng; he can tell many a yarn. One of a pastor (prig that he was!) who fined young girls five shillings each for wearing those exquisite garlands of gardenia, on the ground that they were “immoral,” and bought a cargo of sandalwood out of the proceeds,—selling it again at a huge profit. So saith report—where there's smoke there must be fire. Jack can tell of Bully Hayes, and of scoundrel captains who loaded the schooners with coprah in exchange for paltry “trade” worth not an eighth of its commercial value.

\* \* \* \* \*

Away for a run ashore, amid beauties of vegetation surpassing Rarotonga.

Pigs are tied by the legs to palm trees, the French law being, “Fence in your own stock, for if found on the loose you'll be fined.” Not a bad law, either, we think, on reflecting



[*F. Homes, photo., Papeete.*

TUANE, A BELLE OF RAIATEA—PURE CASTE.

how many pounds we spent in Australia in fencing out other peoples'.

A Chinaman's store is ablaze with bright prints and *pareus*, mostly of Manchester make, but a delight to the natives.

The beach is strewn with cocoanut husks ; banana peel and orange rind are everywhere, and more cosmopolitan still is the hideous land-crab, feeding on hibiscus or *bourau* leaves, and looking like an implet of Satan as he glares at one from his hole, and opens his great claws ere descending 'neath the palm roots. These creatures, called *toopa* by the natives, are in myriads, and are the scavengers of the place. The flesh of the legs makes excellent salads.

Coprah is drying on yonder verandah, whence comes a cheery "Yarana!"\* as we pass by. [In Rarotonga, remember, the salutation is "Eorana."]

The language is slightly different to the Rarotongan, and although all dialects hereabout are allied to the Maori, they are softer and more musical.

It is impossible to do justice to the scenery and environment in ordinary language without adjectives galore. One *must* go, live, love, and appreciate for one's self. Pacific life is unique, the native songs are unique, the people are unique and generous to a fault when not tainted by rascally merchants and scally-wag Europeans.

And thinking thuswise, and almost weary of taking endless notes, we go back to the steamer, for the last batches of squealing pigs are going aboard—the "old man" is on the bridge ready for the "telegraph."

Girls bring stems of frangipanni flowers, ever so sweet, strung on a reed.

So farewell, Raiatea! We have glimpsed thee for a few hours, and the memory will remain green as the grass.

\* Spelt phonetically.

Yet ere we leave we secure many specimens of the shell-wreaths, for which this charming spot is famous. The shells are three kinds of a land mollusc allied to the *bulimus*, or mountain snail, and are found on the trees in the hills.\* Some are a delicate, creamy white; others pale yellow, and others again variegated and striped around with bands of brown.



[Coulon, photo., Papeete.

THE BEACH, RAIATEA.

Each shell is pierced and threaded on a long string; and the effect is most pleasing, fit for a bridal queen. Every one visiting this island should secure some as striking mementoes. The Chile dollar, which is current here, and valued at 1s. 8d., will purchase one.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Let go your head line!” “Stand by the stern line!” And we leave for Tahiti, which will be reached ere midnight, an eleven hours’ run.

\* For names, see Appendix.

More natives have supplemented the deck passengers, and a strong odour of cocoanut oil pervades the ship.

Something impels us to mix with them.

Try to realize the scene on the main deck during this last section of the voyage.

Crouched by the skylight of the engine-room is old "Tariva," in a red-and-white checked sacque, her face puckered and wrinkled with the ravages of experience. What *she* doesn't know of island life is not worth the knowing. Near by is a pretty Tahitian girl of some fifteen years with a dimpled brown baby, a perfect little cherub. She is clad in the loose, pink gown, with the long sleeves edged with white, lace-like fringe, is munching cocoanut, and has no knowledge of stays and corsets. Baskets of palm leaf and pandanus are hanging to the awning rails and lying around, filled with bread-fruit, yams, taro, and bits of bright print and tawdry clothing. Men are reclining on mats and blankets, the latter picked out in red, black, white, and blue; and *pareus* encircle them even more gorgeous. Other mats are rolled in bundles. Plump little women and girls in their teens, with those irresistible watery eyes and long black hair held in position by a red comb, mingle freely with the general throng. The complexions are mostly light chocolate-brown, the nose-bridge incurved, and lips apout. Along comes a sailor, and chucks a "yarana" 'neath some rounded chin, a merry laugh sounding in response.

"These niggers should be stowed 'tween decks," grumbles Major Umphank; "they have no right to mingle with the superior race. I shall appeal to the Company in this matter."

The steward has supplied him with potted-meat sandwiches, cut neatly into "fingers"; with a *sardine à l'huile* to whet the appetite; but a cool soda without the needful in full measure has aroused his ire.

“Pah!” said he, tittling his tongue; “water bewitched and grog begrudged. I tell you, sir, they are aliens, and they positively stink,” he continues, with a vicious twig at his grey moustache, “and any European that associates with them is a low cad, a mere adventurer.”

“Would Christ have called them aliens, do you think, Major Umphank?” meekly suggests our Seventh Day Adventist, with that patriarchal beard; “would He have called a fellow white man a low cad?”

“I don’t know, Prior, I cannot say; neither do I care. As for your white man, I knew one once that died with a Kanaka woman’s dress on—ugh! That’s enough for me,” growls he, with a spiteful spit.

“Why, major,” we chime in, “it was his wife’s dress, and the smell you complain of is only cocoanut oil; the girls anoint the hair, and it’s good for the skin and scalp alike, and—well, we *like* the natives; they are a generous, warm-hearted people, kind to the core, and lovable as children.”

“Attend to your blessed barometers, sir, and let me get out of this.”

Quite subdued, we retire to look at Huaheine away in the distance; and, soon after dinner, fair Eimeo is in view. The French call this beautiful island Moorea.

\* \* \* \* \*

’Tis ten o’clock. The nearly half moon is mistily shining, the sky streaked with filmy cirri, the air balmy and fragrant as with flowers, and—and Tahiti at last! Glorious Tahiti!

Ahead loom up the great mountains, capped with cumulus wound like twisted wool. Mount Orohena, the highest peak, 7321 feet, is buried in the clouds. A little shower is passing northward, and gradually forms a lunar rainbow. Out on the reef is a flare-up torch—just a fisherman catching for market. Point Venus light blazes to eastward.

The *Taviuni* is late by a day, for owing to the squalls we are ten days from Auckland, counting Wednesday twice, on reaching west longitude. The captain is anxious to make the *passé* and see the authorities ere morning comes.

By 11.30 o'clock we are off Papeete. Lights are dotted along the shore, dogs barking, calm—save you riplets dancing in the moonlight. Midnight brings the mighty doctor—his the province to see the tongue and mark the eye—to send to Motu Uta \* any suspected case. But he bothers us not, just looks at the natives, and takes the captain's word that all else is right.

We descend the gangway, rubbing shoe-leather in Tahitian soil as couples, like doves, are softly fondling and talking sweet nothings 'ere market opens, in the early morning hours.

Then to the ship for a wink of sleep.

When the sun is up we hire a cottage on monthly terms, enter into residence, and begin to do Tahiti thoroughly while undergoing the subtle process of "Society Islandization."

\* The pretty quarantine islet, covered with cocoa palms, pronounced "Muttoota." It strongly resembles islets in the Paumotu Archipelago.



## SECTION II

### TAHITI

WHAT TO SEE AND DO WHILE THE STEAMER STAYS

#### CHAPTER V

*First Day.* Practical Information : Physical Geography and Climate—A Charming Paradise—Money Matters. Papeete : The Market—Love Wreaths—Sunday in Tahiti—What Price Spinsters?—Bachelors at a Premium—*Les Belles Tahitiennes*—The Island Grog Shop—The Cathedral—Public Buildings—Native Ways and Bamboo Houses—Seductive Half-castes—Lavina the Goddess—A Bacchanalian Feast A Famous Chief. Mountain Pictures—The Vision of a Soul—The Broom Road—Flotsam and Jetsam—Pomare's Monument—Nothing is Lost—Preaching Extraordinary—A Shrewd Lawyer—Scenes in the Country. Matavai Bay : Memories of Cook. Point Venus : Captain Cook's Monument. Return to Papeete—Evening Pleasures.

Now to address the passing *voyageur* and traveller returning by the boat by which he arrived.

Come along, and see Tahiti !

Happy they who can afford the fortnight between steamers either way, or longer. They will find plenty to do, if only in the study of lavish Nature, and the exercise of the photographer's art, for which there is most ample scope ; and if only resting, mere existence is life in such a charming spot and amid such delightful surroundings.

Tahiti, in the Maori or Polynesian tongue, literally means "transplanted from the East," and herein we have a clue to the origin of the race, probably in Malaysia.

It is an island of volcanic formation, belonging to the French; and very probably, in the early ages of the world, formed part of what is now a submerged continent.

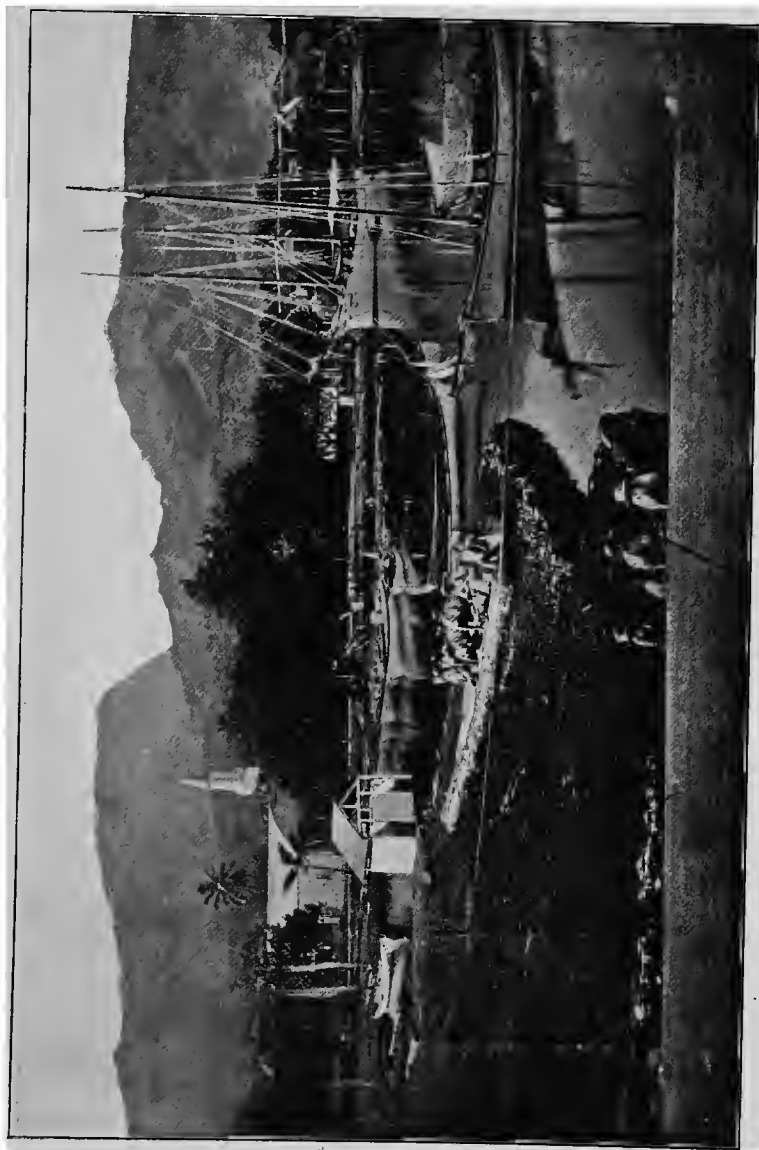
It is enclosed by a coral reef of wondrous beauty, and is 33 miles in length, measured on a north-west and south-east line.

The mean geographical position is latitude 17 degrees 38 minutes S.; longitude 149 degrees 25 minutes W.

The interior is very mountainous; and Orohena, the highest peak, so precipitous that no one has yet succeeded in scaling it. It is well watered, the lovely river-valleys between the gorges being very fertile.

The main habitable portion, however, is comprised within the narrow belt which surrounds the island: between the coast and the mountains. There the soil has amazing productiveness, all tropical fruits and products thriving to perfection. The passes through the reefs are caused by the out-flowing of the numerous little rivers, the fresh water preventing the coral insect from building.

The climate has long been remarkable for salubrity; and temperature, though elevated, is equable and pleasant. People have lived to eighty years; but longevity depends on restraining "wild oats." The maximum in the shade rarely reaches 94 degrees in January, the hottest month; and seldom falls below 82 degrees in June. Night temperature ranges between 63 degrees and 81 degrees, according to the season. Europeans do *not* suffer from the diseases common to them in other tropical countries. The prevailing winds are between S.E. and N.E., modified by the mountains and land and sea breezes—local features due to physiography. Storms rarely occur. There is no regular rainy season, neither is Tahiti subject to droughts; but the heaviest rains take place between December and January.



PORT OF PAPEETE, TAHITI.

[Coulton, photo.]

We now suppose that the passing tourist can only stay four days. Well, we'll show him how to make the best of his short visit, working in as much general information as possible within the limits of this publication; becoming, if we may, companion and guide—for we now know Tahiti well, and will give the benefit of personal experience.

References to ancient history will be brief. We want the tourist to see Tahiti as it *now is*. Those desiring information referring to the period anterior to the advent of European influence will do well to consult the journals of the Polynesian Society, and articles on the subject published by the French Government.

The boat from Auckland usually remains two days, and that from San Francisco four days.

It is surprising what can be done in a short time, and in a land where even a little sacrifice of personal convenience becomes a pleasure to the stranger.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before leaving the steamer, interview the purser on the money question. He will be found invariably courteous; some Companies, indeed, select this functionary for his affable qualities as well as business acumen, and he is always ready to give passengers every assistance.

If from California, with American coin, you need fear no trouble; but if from New Zealand, and necessarily coming provided with British gold, you may suffer loss.

Now, the currency of Tahiti is the Chile dollar, a huge heavy coin, large as a five-shilling piece, and the value of it as accepted is 1s. 8d. Therefore for a sovereign you should receive in exchange twelve Chile dollars, and not a fraction less, for King Edward's gold is worth full value the wide world over. The purser will readily give this, and the Company will *never* allow its patrons to be imposed upon.

But if a pound be changed on shore,\* even at a Colonial house within a kilomètre from the wharf where the steamer is moored, 11 dollars and 70 cents only will be given; and that even if you deal with such a firm by buying curios, clothing, or otherwise. Now, 30 cents will not ruin one—it is the idea of “being had” that cuts, and the principle of the thing that wounds. If you remonstrate, the manager will tell you, in vehement English, considering himself the injured party, that he occupies that place not to lose money, and did not come to Tahiti to drop 30 cents. He will try to teach you that 2 plus 2 equals 5. In other words, one will be charged what amounts to an “Income Tax” of 5*d.* in the pound, which is preposterous; and it will be conceded by all in New Zealand, and elsewhere, that it is *not* the way to secure travellers’ custom, and is bad in business withal.

The best of European settlers are the genuine French; being, as they are, directly under the ægis of the Government.

Sorry as a Britisher to say so, but there is a *something* in the air of the tropics that, after a lengthy residence, demoralizes some—by no means all—Europeans in ordinary business, making them mere money-grubbers, blind to all else save dollars, and the acclimatized Englishman is no exception. He will have you if he can. He has communicated this disease to natives within the town boundary, also the malady called jealousy, and its twin sister tale-bearing. *Evitez les rapporteurs.* One person, with whom we had been dealing, promptly called a clique, as Lochiel his clan, and made them agree that if Wragge essayed to change a sovereign, they would give no more than 11 dollars 70 cents. “White men” resented this, and we got on swimmingly.

Some firms in Papeete recognize the blunder of “short change,” readily give full money for a pound, as we personally

\* Except as hereafter mentioned.

know, and are glad to see, and cordially welcome, new-comers. Happy the tourist if he strikes such an one. If not, go to the British Consul—full value *there*, or ask for Mr. Charles Garbutt, an English gentleman who acts as interpreter, and he will see you right. There are no banks, but traders may negotiate a circular note or bill, and La Caisse Agricole issues paper money.

Many of the traders are old “shell-backs”—captains who have walked the poop whistling for the wind, who have hung on to the weather shrouds during many a blow—and the *good* old “shell-back” is a good man, take our tip for *that*.

Although French money passes current, especially at public offices (26 francs to the pound, recollect), yet are the Chile dollars and cents all-powerful among the general trading community. Where they stow them, goodness only knows!

Note, by the way, that French coin, anterior to 1867, has depreciated in value. A franc of that period only equals 20 cents of Chile money, which means 4*d.*, and half a franc 10 cents. Look at the pieces you receive in change.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

To carry out our programme means energy, and the utter disregard of the Tahitian maxim, which reads thuswise, “Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow.” The French expression is “*Ce n’est pas pressé*”—nothing, in fact, is pressing in Tahiti. But *push* we *must* to see the place in the allotted time.

The money question settled, then, and your pockets full of heavy coin—mind they are well stitched, and your pants moored with a stout belt—away we go by 5 a.m. or earlier, ashore at Papeete, as the first streak of a tropic day gilds the horizon and tinges those eternal mountains, growing in colour and tints more and more exquisite with every degree of the quickly rising sun.

Just note that the name Papeete means “water-basket.”

The old name was “Vai-ete.”—*Vai*, water; *ete*, basket; *pape* also implies water. The town is supplied by the rains in the hills, hence at once the signification.

Just at hand are the Post Office, *Octroi*, and Custom House. The chief of the *Douane* is a gentleman; he acts on the rectangle, and expects all others to negotiate the square—would there were more like him!

The narrow street leading townwards, direct from the wharf and across the Quai du Commerce, is the Rue de la petite Pologne. Following this up some two hundred yards, note the telephone wires leading into the Exchange. They were erected and the service is maintained by the energy of one man, Monsieur Ducorron, a private mechanician and electrician, who has pinned the wires to trees half round the island. He is most obliging and courteous, and may be able to do you many a kindness.

Most of the houses are wooden; some, however, are brick with iron roofs or red tiles, and the blinds and venetians are so tastefully stencilled in generous and warm colours that one is forcibly reminded of beautiful Italia.

\* \* \* \* \*

Turning now sharply to the right, we are in the market, and close handy are Chinamen’s stores of the shanty type of architecture, quite a feature of the place. We enter one, the house of Sin Shin Li, and call for morning coffee. For 10 cents we get it steaming hot, freshly ground and fragrant; milk in tiny pewter, and loaf sugar with biscuits thrown in, sufficient till *déjeuner* at Lavina’s at 11 o’clock.

Who Lavina is we shall presently see.

There’s an old captain, just in from the Paumotus, second cousin to Bully Hayes. He spread last night, and lists to starboard with a nervous gait.

Sweet-faced *Tahitiennes* are sitting around, baskets beside

them, sipping their potions and awaiting the clang of the bell at 5 or 5.30, depending on the season which announces the opening of market every morning, Sunday included. Butchers, fish-sellers, Chinese with vegetables, and others, are ready under the great shed; but nothing will be sold till that bell rings.

Suppose, it *is* Sunday, the fête-market of the week. By the wash-pool in the centre of the square are girls and women in their brightest and best, men from the mountains and lads from the country, fern and flower wreaths around their hats, with garlands of the Tahitian gardenia, "*Tiare Tahiti*," so sweet, pure, and white, and scenting for yards the balmy atmosphere.

Oh, those wreaths,\* how much they convey! Retire, O Muse, and let the curtain fall! Others are made of the fragrant frangipanni or plumeria blossoms, and are placed for sale, spread on banana leaves lying on the ground, side by side with bamboo hats, fans, and coronets of bark or sugar-cane, cleverly wrought. Smiling damsels are squatting beside, flowers behind ears and bits of gay ribbon, ready for the boy who will buy and present.

Great goodness! *what* a difference from Sunday morning in New Zealand! Housewives in buggies have come to purchase, and all is animation, lively, rollicking, jolly!—a happy people revelling in life, laughing and chaffing, telling of loves and follies, and talking that scandal that knows and means no harm. Sailors from the warships add vim to the scene.

See, there is a young Hercules just come from the mountains, and another and another, with great bunches of *feis*, or the hills banana, strung on bamboo poles across the shoulder. The flesh where the weight has rested is hard and warty. They look like brown Satyrs come into some feast. Great chaplets of fern leaves, mixed with flowers, adorn the brow, and *pareus* of yellow encircle the hips; no trousers for them!

\* Called *heis* in Tahitian.





[Coulton, photo.]

A MARKET GROUP, TAHITI.

What a study in ethnography does this market-place afford! Impossible to mistake the Tahitians—something stamps them at once. The Malay origin is evident, the original stock of the great Maori race. The general tint of the complexion is brownish olive, more or less dark in the robust and agile man, but often fair in those fascinating women on every side.

Let's diagnose one of these belles of the Pacific! Bridge of nose incurved, nostrils slightly flattened; and lips, if a trifle thick, yet in perfect harmony with pearls of teeth and those deep brown eyes, so sweet and voluptuous without offence. Hair black as ebony flowing over the shoulders, sometimes tied with a bit of bright ribbon and capped by that wreath; legs bare, feet too, ankles just lovely. Cæsar's ghost! no wonder the French officers go off their heads.

Some of the little darlings are smoking cigarettes, rolled in pandanus leaves; and "just too bewitching" is too mild a term. Why, the wonderful colours of the dresses alone, with combinations of effect and those amazing flowers, are used to attract noble man, in the hope that he will come nearer and study the features. And they do it, too, by physiological principles.

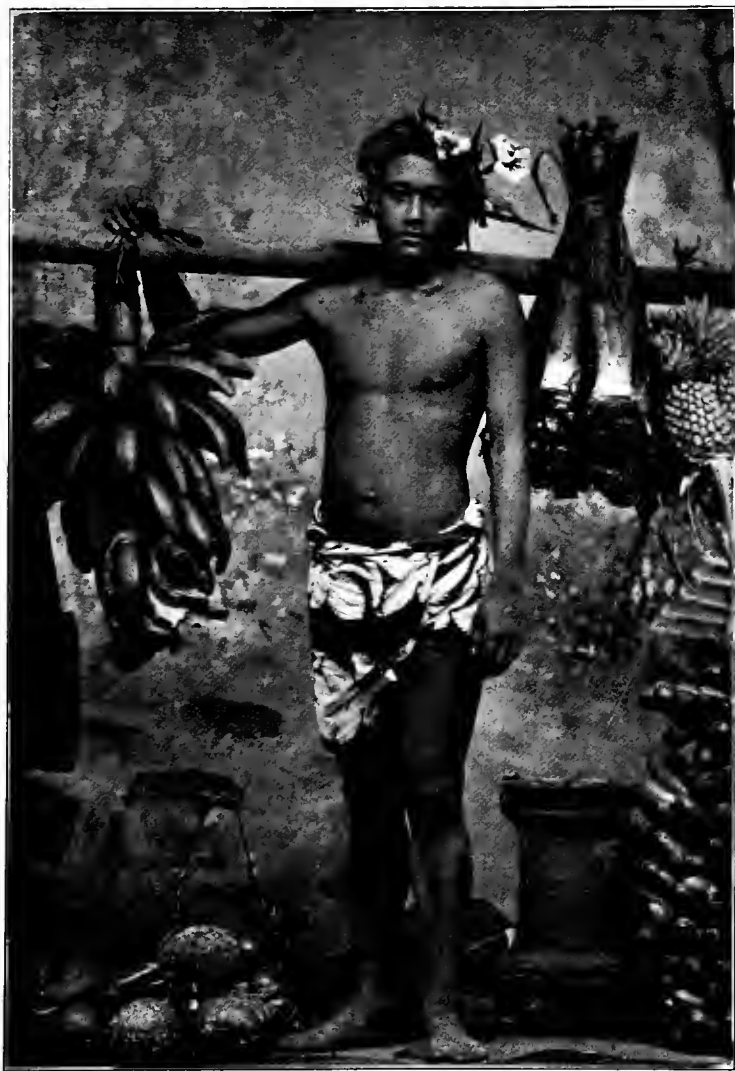
Youth and motherhood are side by side, and that dear old dried-up spinster of sixty is absolutely unknown. As for bachelors, not one exists over sixteen years. The language streams forth in bubbles and ripples, made up, in fact, of those rolling vowels,—is not our title a happy one?

Huge bunches of oranges, bundles of cocoanuts, bananas in palm baskets,\* and piles of breadfruit, tied up with hibiscus or other fibre, are laid on either side with a "gangway" between.

Just look at the fish brought in from the reefs! Think of that picture, "A Race to Market," in the Sydney Art Gallery; †

\* All native baskets are called *ete*; except the *round* ones, made of palm leaves, termed *ohini*.

† By the way, Tahitians call Australia *Puane-pei*, which, translated, means "Rotten Pot."



A YOUNG HERCULES.

[Coulon, photo.]

you must have seen it, 'tis a favourite in that beautiful collection. The fish are of every colour, size and form; some slender and elaborately spotted with blue, yellow, and red; great batches of flying fish; and others, as the *ume*, a scaleless kind, are fitted



[Coulon, photo.]

MARAA, A TAHITIAN BELLE—PURE CASTE.

with a battering ram on the head and ensign at the stern—and more and more—to the slimy conger and hideous groper, tied in bundles with *bourau*\* bark, and looking as if they had just been hauled up from the sludge-pools of Pluto.† The colours of the parrot fish are simply gorgeous. Then there are crabs lashed up with palm leaves, and huge prawns a foot long. The fish-eater and ichthyologist are here in Eden.

John Chinaman is doing a swinging trade, and the coffee-shop is full.

See! there is Miss "Pale-face" from Pitcairn Island. Her father, mother, and

the whole family, direct descendants from the mutineers of the *Bounty*, are down for a spell. Pitcairn's too dull!

The boss of a shanty salutes as we pass; he is an old beach-comber, and knows something. "Goot-day, captain!" says he.

\* Remember, the *bourau* tree is the *hibiscus tiliaceus* of botanists. Its yellow flowers with crimson centre will at once be recognized.

† For scientific names of fish, see Appendix.

Every stranger is captain. The South Seas teem with them as America with Colonels. Wish Mark Twain were here! Why *ever* didn't *he* come to Tahiti?

Yonder a Frenchman, basket in hand, and in whitest suit. Madame has sent him for endive for salad, and meat for *déjeûner*. A knowing *yarana* to Aimata with the wreaths, and a cheery *bon jour* to his cheapest butcher. “Comment allez-vous, monsieur? Ici les cotelettes à quarante cents.”

Dogs and pigeons are prowling around for delicate morsels.

See next the Chinese vegetable stalls, called in native *Tinto potta*, which, being interpreted, means “Chinese greens.” Most of the European vegetables are cultivated in Chinese gardens. Here are displayed lettuce, onions, radishes, water-cress, parsley, and *et ceteras* by a number that cannot be cited. “What you wantec? Me gib you tomatée ten cent.” Nothing is less than this figure, which means twopence.

There is a native with tiara of gardenia and *pareu* of red woven with white in design that recalls some ecclesiast's insignia. Beside him are sticks of green bamboo, filled with cocoanut chopped and soft, to be eaten with fish when sour and tart.

There goes a lad with a wreath of orange peel.

Listen to that strain in accidentals and minors, and sounds as of revel beyond yon store. Boys are chanting a Tahitian ditty, weird, quaint, and ending in a long prolonged drawl, *Arioi, Arioi*, which seems to eulogize a native clan, whose only aim in life was enjoyment—the flesh and its pleasures to the last item—eating, drinking, singing, and dancing. Others chant the “Arue” hymn, which refers to an adjacent district.

Near is a grog shop, open as usual, and known as “Lambert's.” A stray, white sailor, bewitched by Tahiti, and a renegade from his ship, may haply be heard in the throes of “Rolling Home” for the benefit of dusky friends,

adorned with pandanus fruit and earlets of hibiscus flowers, indulging in rum.

“Ay! up aloft, amid the rigging,  
Sings the loud exulting gale,  
Oh, ay, rolling home, r-o-lling—”

'Tis time he rolled home to his shanty on the beach, down among the land-crabs and under the *bourau* tree, or some gendarme may come along and tie up his wrists with a bit of string.

\* \* \* \* \*

Are your Chile dollars heavy? Well, hitch up your pantaloons and “never mind.” Dickens said that, and it means a lot.

Better leave the market now, and take a turn round the town. All stores and offices are closed on Sunday, except Chinese. The cathedral bells are ringing for morning Mass, for 'tis seven o'clock. There go two Sisters of Mercy, in garb so drear, in the wake of yon priest, with the “gaff topsail coat and trade-wind hat.”

Let's look at the church. 'Tis all on our cruise. A noble building for Tahiti, worthy, forsooth, of Macon or Dijon. Great aisles and arches support the roof, and the stations of the Cross are worth inspection.

We are now on the Broom Road, the circular way that surrounds the main island, and runs close to the sea.

Two natives, drunk with rum and adorned with gardenia, are helping each other to “Home, Sweet Home;” there's a French officer with a girl on each arm.

The road was made under the rule of the old English missionaries, and subsequently so improved by the æsthetic French that it now forms for leagues a fine boulevard. This portion is called the “Rue de Rivoli.” What a parody!



[Couton, photo.]

TAHITIAN DANCERS AND SINGERS—PURE CASTE.

We pass the ice-works.

On turning westward (never travel without a pocket-compass) is a large paddock or compound, having over the entrance "S cretariat G n ral." Beyond, and standing out in noble proportions, is a fine, two-storied building surrounded by a broad balcony. This is the ancient palace of the Pomares, the old regal family of Tahiti, now used as the Government offices. Here *Le Gouverneur des  tablissements Franais de l'Oc anie*, Monsieur Cor, transacts State business, aided by his officers, and native clerks speaking French.

There is no "Alien Restriction Act;" it would not work in a land where all is one family, divided into jealous sections, it is true, but each one knowing and respecting in a way the other.

If remaining, and if a week-day, and after 4 p.m., call on the Governor at his office on the first floor. He is a characteristic Frenchman, typical of his polished country, kind, genial, and gallant, and will consider your visit a compliment. The late Governor, also, was universally beloved by all who had the privilege of his friendship; and when he left, never to return, they loaded the decks with wreaths and flowers in his worthy honour.

If you decide to remain longer in Tahiti, be sure to visit the British and American Consuls down by the beach, both men whom ladies would term "charming," brimful of information, and ever ready to do one a good turn. That is the verdict of the "Highest Court of Appeal"—we can add nothing and subtract nothing.

The late Queen Pomare was the last reigning sovereign, the dynasty being now represented by Prince Hinoi, her son, as warm-hearted a fellow as ever trod, and reminding one in this respect of our beloved King when he was Prince of Wales. Tahiti, having at length been sold to the French, accounts



for the present *régime*. Prince Hinoï is pensioned by the Government, and a jolly good time he has. Every one loves him.

Close to the palace is the Cercle Colonial, or club *par excellence* of the French *élite*. Its balconies can tell of dice, whist, and euchre, vast sums lost and others gained; so can those of the Cercle Bougainville down by the Quay.

Still going on down the Broom Road, which in Papeete runs through the middle of the town, we notice a band-stand in a large compound, surrounded with seats and the foliage of the magnificent *poinciana regia* or *flamboyante* trees. Towards the end of the year these will be blazing in rich red flowers, as much a picture as the chestnuts in Bushey Park in May. This is the great *fête* ground, and is all alive on July 14th, which commemorates the taking of the Bastille. On that occasion, native choirs assemble from all parts of the island, and the *himines*, so famous in Tahitian folk-lore, are rendered in a way, and amid environments, never to be forgotten. The costumes and wreaths are grotesquely picturesque, dresses of *bourau* or hibiscus fibre being especially conspicuous. Even the wheels and spokes of the buggies are garlanded in flowers.

Prior to three years ago native revels were held in addition, and “to the pure all things are pure.” But Monsieur Narquois, a prominent citizen and disciple of Calvin, smelt fungoids. The stench was so bad that polypus threatened, and he petitioned the Government. So dancing was stopped to save his life, and love ditties were *tabu*, while monsieur was canonized in *L'Annuaire Officiel*.

One can thus understand how—to this cheerful and sweet-natured people, loving music with all their souls—the Catholic religion appeals more powerfully than the Methodist *culte*, with its arid doctrine and painful invective against the little follies and frivolities of life.

Farther on are the Gendarmerie Coloniale, L'Hôpital Militaire and Prison Coloniale; but the latter is a very different affair to the fearful camps of New Caledonia, and mainly confines 'mid a tropic bower of paw-paw trees, for a few hours or days, occasional drunks and minor miscreants.

As for an execution, such has never officially taken place in this happy country. They have a guillotine, just as a formality, but the hideous thing is going to ruin; the box is dirty and the blade rusty, and no proud executioner flips it with his finger to test the metal as at "La Nouvelle."

In fact, crime, as we understand it, is unknown in Tahiti; where is ample evidence of high civilization, in some respects far more rational than our *régime*, because more natural in basis. There is little actual theft, unless by some scapegrace brought by the steamers.

There is no "sin," save what some understand by "immorality," and, with respect to that, relieve your mind of bias, and always remember that *different countries and change of latitude mean different customs*. Moreover, the people, living happily under the *lex non scripta* of Mother Nature, were far more moral in our sense anterior to the advent of the missionary. He was followed by the inevitable gin-bottle, which got in somehow, as in the other islands.

They esteem it an honour to have children, especially if the father is a European. Some white people look upon it as a disgrace. Remember that, not only in Tahiti, but elsewhere in the Pacific, children are amply provided for by the custom of adoption before they are born.

It reads in the Scriptures, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Is it possible to find *every* white man absolutely contented even in fair Tahiti? The answer must be "No." Some there are who would not leave it for all the wealth beyond the seas; yet one may have the prettiest girl in all



COSTUMES WORN AT TAHITIAN FÊTES.

Γ [Coulon, photo.

the district for a wife, and the bonniest of brown children, but a time crops up in a restless individual, satiated with the pleasures of island life, when he pines for the "Owl Express" bound east from 'Frisco, and the "Flying Scotchman" from Euston to Carlisle. Such become satiated with Tahiti peace, and long for the *Times* and *Punch* once more.

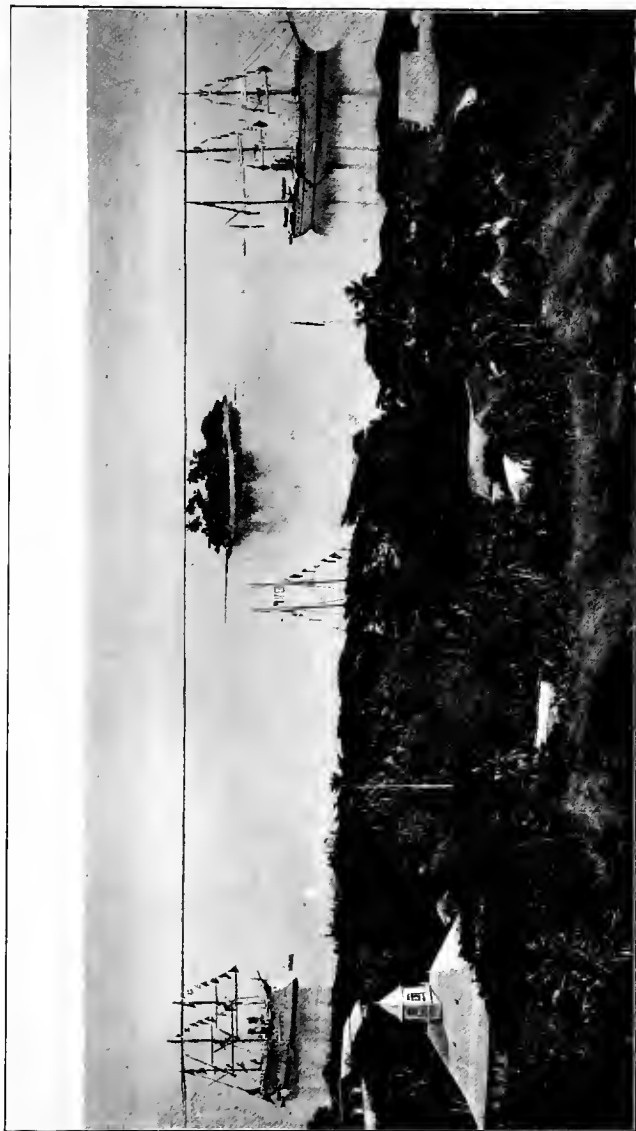
One's property, remember, is generally respected, so much so that your bag could be left by the wayside, if only addressed, with considerable certainty of its safety. But petty larceny *may* occur, for black sheep are in every flock. It is the exception and not the rule. The Tahitian regards food as common, and some may not scruple at annexing a chicken, or even a pair of stray boots, though the latter are seldom used, most natives going barefoot.

Making a little *détour*, we ascend to the Signal Station on the brow behind Papeete, obtaining a fine panorama of town and coast right to Point Venus. Yonder are lying the French gunboats. Snuggling amid the dense palms to eastward is the Bishop's Palace, and a palace it is, while the Christ had nowhere to lay His head. The soil is ruddy scoria, and in it grows the *furcraea gigantea*, or 'Mauritius hemp,' that valuable aloe-like plant, its great fleshy and spiny leaves carved with the love-names of the natives, just as in New Caledonia.

Closely adjacent is a battery of rusty old guns, anything but in readiness to defend the *passé*. Practice with these is never attempted, and our good French friends should remember that a gun has no nerves save those of the gunner. Below, to westward, is the powder magazine in the St. Amelie Valley, with patches of guinea-grass around, ever so green, for the soldiers' horses.

\* \* \* \* \*

Descending, and going still by the Broom Road and over



[Coulon, photo.]

GENERAL VIEW OF PAPEETE FROM THE SIGNAL STATION.

the little bridge spanning the Tipaerui river, a bonny burn from the mountains, we stroll 'midst magnificent tropical scenery, with great palms, breadfruit, hibiscus, and bananas on either side.

Skirting the beach, we come to the Gilbert Island village, a cluster of thatched huts almost laved by the waves. Be careful, however, leprosy and elephantiasis \* have haunts in this quarter.

Funny sights are hereabouts—a woman taking her pet pig for a swim, its tail all acock; another waist-deep in the water, fishing with a bamboo rod; and hauled up on the coral are the catamarans, forming with the *ensemble* excellent snap-shots.

When a Gilbert islander dies, the natives get rum at the town grog-shop. Then there is a "burst" right round the corpse. A hole is dug *anywhere*, if outside the town; consecrated ground is not a necessity. Any body can be buried in any place, even in a garden beside a house, so long as the grave is *outside* Papeete; and this has been done often enough, for natives like the bodies of beloved ones near them—just as in Rarotonga and other islands—and each has usually a family burying-place.

See the supernal ocean with its reefs, white crests, and exquisite colours; and beyond the rugged heights of Eimeo. This is the old name for that fascinating island known to the French as Moorea, and is still used by the natives among themselves.

The neat thatch and bamboo houses of Tahitians are opposite the huts of the Gilbert islanders and farther on, all down the Broom Road. If we enter one, there is the kindest welcome,

\* Elephantiasis is probably produced by the effect of mosquito bites. Europeans seldom contract it. *Filaria*, or tiny worms, are formed in the blood, and produce swellings of the legs, feet, and other parts. Should medical men read these notes, we may mention that thirty-five kilos of matter were taken from the scrotum under operation at the Papeete hospital.

with a warm *yarana* and a cocoanut thrown in, just from the tree, full of sweet milk and soft young pulp like delicious cream. As in other islands, so here, the cocoa palm is the mainstay of the people. Even if cut off from all other supplies, it still provides them with food, matting, and shelter. Even the



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

A TAHITIAN HOME, WITH BREADFRUIT TREE BEHIND.

heart of the young palm can be eaten. When cooked it tastes like cauliflower, and if raw makes an excellent salad. The nut, eaten when the first leaves begin to sprout, yields a substance nutritious like sweetened corn.

Look out, don't run foul of babies as you step along. They are scattered over the ground like fleece from a shearing-shed, rolled in *pareus* or shawls of the brightest hue, and cannot easily be missed.

Suppose by this time it is nine o'clock, two more hours to the French *déjeûner* ; unless, indeed, you wish to breakfast with the natives, who will forthwith offer raw fish steeped in vinegar, bread-fruit, yams, taro, *feis*, bananas, and chicken or sucking-pig, seasoned with delicious sauce called *noanoa* ; and for drink limewater, or the actual milk of the cocoanut.

You prefer to go on? Very well! Then we'll ramble round Papeete. Look out for the buggies, and mind the bicycles. Never was such a place for them. Vistas of the sea can generally be glimpsed, and there is no chance of getting bushed.

Note that the "rule of the road" when carriages meet is the opposite to that in British countries. It is the same as at sea, where the dictum reads, "Two ships meeting, end on, or nearly end on, the helms of both shall be put to port, so that each shall pass on the port side of the other." This means on land that when one conveyance meets another, each driver pulls his right-hand rein, and "shows his red light," as we say at sea, slewing the horse to starboard with the hand on the mainbrace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let us follow up this little street, along that, and then down another, noting everything as we go. Narrow little ways they are, with quaint oil-lamps placed at intervals on wooden posts, painted blue or green in striking tones. Real tropic lanes, very bowers and avenues of beauty ; in fact, the whole place is one luxuriant garden.

Note the rubbish-heaps by the wayside. Each housewife piles up the refuse at 8 a.m., ready for the scavenger, who takes it to a pit away by the beach.

If the vegetation of Rarotonga is superb, what shall be said of Tahiti? The indigenous plants and trees of the island comprise some 550 species, and there are now over 2500 of other varieties all told, owing to the introduction of tropical



plants from elsewhere, which thrive and run riot in the rich Tahitian soil. What is missing in the animal and mineral kingdoms, both of which are poor, is amply compensated for in the vegetable domain.

To the flora we must frequently refer; it cannot be otherwise in a land where the vegetation is the most striking feature, inherent as it is to the life, enjoyment, and environment of the people.

Gorgeous bougainvilleas in one blaze of purple flower arrest the eye, thrown out the more by the yellow allamanda, climbing around the tiny villas in splendid contrast. Even the grape vine may be seen; its fruit ripens in September. And the superb palms and glorious leaves of the bread-fruit are everywhere, toned down by the softer green of the great banana groves.

Paling fences, with the panels pointed at top and painted white, enclose the chalets from the adjacent way. See! the entrance gates are coloured in pale blue. Truly, Nature has made these people the artists of the Pacific! And the colouring blends to perfection with the vegetable wealth.

Clumps of bamboo festoon from aloft, and the *arundo donax*—the reed of Achilles—has been introduced from Europe, and thrives amazingly. Nor must we forget to mention the lantana. In the old days, when communication with Tahiti was from Valparaiso, some enterprising settler introduced it from Chile. It took possession, and ran amuck. Though now deemed a pest, its hedges in full flower add to the general beauty; and here and there the fronds of the date palm, the fan palms of Australia and Mauritius, and the slender areca nut, add to the tableau with telling effect.

Boys are playing in the lanes with tops, and at “pitch-and-toss;” girls are flying kites; pianos are going the whole day long, marred perhaps by the harsher tones of the accordion. A

more music-loving race could not exist, yet few people sing except the natives in their weird chants.

Ever and anon, as we stroll along, one hears the "whiz-whiz" of the "Singer" sewing-machine, in which Tahitians delight.

In Papeete itself residential houses are mainly of wood, resting on lava stones or little stumps, and roofed, like the shops, with corrugated iron; but even so, and the iron notwithstanding, the wonderful vegetation redeems the defect; and when, as is frequent, the roofs are painted dark red, they look pleasing rather than otherwise.

Once outside Papeete, the architecture is principally of native type. It must be admitted that the iron-roofed cottages are very hot; some have only two rooms, with the kitchen at the back, and an apology for a bath. Paper-hangers sent out by the sailing-ships in the good old days marvels of stock which had gone out of fashion, and walls are covered in odd designs suggesting the time of Louis-Philippe.

Altogether, to one remaining, a humpy by the beach down Patutoa way, close to Papeete, is infinitely preferable to staying in town. That's where we lived.

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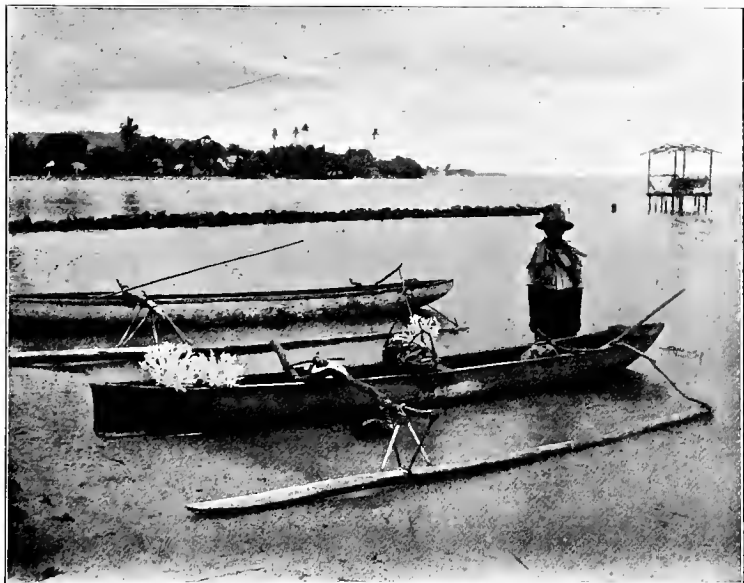
There are no hotels, properly so called, unless one mentions L'Hôtel de France; and should you contemplate a longer stay, take a cottage, furnished or otherwise; but look out for cockroaches, and 'ware the red ants.

Such can be got from 18 to 48 Chile dollars per month. Captain William Walker, a grand old "shell-back," and a respected resident, is the man to apply to. He has several pretty little houses to let, and in dealing with him you will not be wronged. He once ran the schooner-mail to Valparaiso, and now works a store quite close to the market. Furniture can be hired on most reasonable terms from Monsieur Leboucher—a man with whom you can trust your purse—who

would not “do you” by half a cent. Do not forget his name. Such men are rare.

Why, even as we pass, see that *dulce domum* with “*maison à louer*,” pinned to the gate.

As for living, it’s not ruinous, and here are some details



[C. L. Wragge, photo.

VIEW IN FRONT OF THE AUTHOR’S BUNGALOW, PATUTOA, TAHITI.

expressed in cents, Chile money: Fowls or ducks, 80; cut of beef sufficient for one, 20; eggs per dozen, 70; loaf of bread, 20; kilo of sugar, 30; fruits and vegetables, 10 to 50; wood for cooking, 20 per bundle; and other items at like reasonable figures. Fish for two meals cost 50 cents, while sufficient *fcis*, breadfruit, and cocoanuts, can be got for 2 dollars to feed one for a week.

Everything depends on getting early to market, and more still on a good servant. Such who could cook would cost 10 dollars a week, while a native girl would probably suffice at a dollar a day and all found.

All included, a single person can live at Tahiti on the fat of the land for 6 Chile dollars *per diem*, if only one goes the right way to work. Should you prefer the country and life with the natives, a dollar and a half a day, or 2s. 6d., will be ample provision.

One enterprising company sought to erect a "Hôtel Cecil" down by the beach right facing Moorea, fit to accommodate the Prince of Monaco and my Lords of London, but "went broke" at the critical time—no Chile dollars, and the hawser parted. We shall see the ribs when we stroll that way.

The Klopfer *buffet* and *hospice* for visitors will soon be opened on the Quai de l'Uranie—a splendid position facing the sea, and bids fair to surpass Lavina's in excellence, of which more anon. It is partly associated with the "Homes Studio," where excellent photographs can be secured. Mr. Homes gives full value always for the British pound, and is, like Leboucher, "straight as a die;" so is little Spitz, his assistant, and we *know*. Another good man is Coulon. He, too, is a photographic artist, and it is difficult to say whose pictures are the best.

A splendid future awaits an hotel company with pluck and capital. Permanent communication by steamer is now assured by Government subsidies, whereby Tahiti and its boundless attractions will become better known.

And never must one lose sight of the fact that once the Panama Canal is opened, Papeete will be on the main trunk route between Sydney, New Zealand, and the Continent of Europe.

There are numbers of half-caste girls in Papeete, Tahitian blood blended with British, American, French, and Spanish.



[Coulon, photo.]

TITI, A HALF-CASTE. (FRENCH-TAHITIENNE.)

The *half-caste* is regarded as a blessing from heaven—a special gift—a mark of favour.

As the noble author of that delightful book, “South Sea Bubbles,” truly says—in effect, at any rate—“If God made white girls, and the devil half-castes, then has Satan shown better taste.” No irreverence, mind!

Positively, they are *charming*—judge for yourself ere endorsing this opinion. Many a one will be noted, coyly peeping from behind her lattice or bamboo blind, or squatting on the verandah as we pass by.

They all wear the loose *sacque* dress—the garb of French women in the seventeenth century, with those long sleeves that are so becoming—made with the “Singer” machines.

Some of these dresses are wholly yellow, saffron, or all pink; others red or blue, relieved in white, some quite white; and are made of muslin, light lawn, or tasteful print. In appearance they are enchanting, and the women are too sensible to disfigure the human form divine and the bairnies yet to be born by those abominable corsets which curse the votaries of so-called “fashion.”

Now, Nature never created stays. If God had intended women to be braced with bits of whalebone, He’d have parcelled them up. And Nature is avenged, sure enough—can’t break *her* law, you know; the thing’s impossible—sooner or later the reckoning comes, even though innocent children have to suffer, and compound interest is charged on the transaction. Oh yes, good friend, our ladies can learn a lot from Tahitian women!

\* \* \* \* \*

Getting hungry, are you? Well, it’s close upon eleven, *onze heures*, so we’ll go to Lavina’s. Who knows not Lavina, knows not Papcete.

She is a delightful woman, the pearl of some forty years of Tahitian life, ever smiling, ever jolly. Like other women, she is fat—eats too many *feis*; and she likes her dollars—who does not?

Her place is a handsome villa at the corner of the Broom Road and the Rue de la petite Pologne: it is recognized at once by the flags.

Floating high on a pole over the main entrance is the proud “Red, White, and Blue” of *La Belle France*. This *must* occupy the most prominent position, and be higher than any other flag, or there would be a rumpus with the Government. The “Union Jack” floats modestly on the left on a much smaller staff, and the “Stars and Stripes” on the other side on the right.

Trust Lavina! *She* knows how many blue beans make five, and her great gala day is when the *Mariposa* comes in from San Francisco.

Needless to say, she keeps a boarding-house, and a first-class one, too. An exquisite garden, with crotons, dracenas, and other gems of the tropics, fronts the place, the rails of which are picked out in that pale blue and white that is so effectual.

On entering, we find an array of little tables on the wide verandah, each with a snow-white cloth and a *bouteille* of red French claret, the universal drink among the European community. The legs of the tables may be enclosed in water-vessels to keep off those little red ants which attack all food, and will even bore holes in the cork of the oil-bottle.

The hostess receives with open arms. Neat Tahitian boys and native girls, decked in chaplets of the sweetest flowers, are ready to attend, and the repast commences.

Shall we give a menu ?

“ Radis, beurre, sardine à l’huile.

Poisson au récif.

Cotelettes à l’Hinoï. Salade.

Poulet à la belle Tahitienne, sauce des cocotiers  
(enough to make a man’s mouth water for a week !).

Légumes au goût, à la Lavina.

CONFITURES.

Fromage au choix.

Vins rouges ou blancs.

Café noir.”

Here is a feast fit, indeed, for Prince Hinoï, who, himself *le bonvivant*, is a frequent *habitué*. Cost one dollar seventy cents, Chile money, each.

We sit for a while on the broad verandah. Have a cigarette ? Algerian tobacco and tip-top.

Between puffs, let us tell you that Lavina excels at special banquets. We’ll try to describe one which we actually witnessed. There are many such, and well-known residents may take their turn in standing the expense.

Is a prominent citizen going away ? Well, he is royally fêted and farewelled at Lavina’s—a Bacchanalian revel *à la manière de Taïti*. The gods are assembled, clothed in white, and *heis* of gardenia—great wreaths of the sweetest—are around the head with fern leaves amingling over the brow. The scent from the flowers intoxicates the brain, and penetrates the air right down the street.

Lavina is goddess, Terina is slave-girl ; one thinks of Mount Ida. The Prince presides, glowing with *bonhomie*, supported by the Consuls trying to look serious and miserably failing, each with his wreath.

The verandah is ablaze with kerosene lamps, the palms rustle alto in the pale moonlight, the atmosphere acts like balm to the skin.



“*Attention!*” Hinoï, the representative of the Pomares, is going to speak.

“John Bull! go ahead; charge glass; *à votre santé*. Hip!



[Coulon, photo.]

PRINCE HINOÏ POMARE.

hip! hip! for the John Bull,” says the Prince, and champagne flows like streams of Orohena.

English prevails mingled with French.

“Lavina! Lavina!” one guest exclaims, “she’ll tell you about that man that’s virtuous, and the other man that isn’t.”

The British Consul looks askance; Uncle Sam adjusts his wreath and lights a cigar.

“He said, and to her hands the goblet heaved,  
Which with a smile Lavina’s lips received.  
Then to the rest he fill’d.  
Hinoi with awkward grace his office plies,  
And unextinguished laughter shakes the skies.” \*

“Here’s a last to our host,” shouts the croupier, with fronds of fern leaves over his eyes. “Thank God, I’ve never been put to bed by His Britannic Majesty’s Representative!”

At last there rises on the still night air the strains of a wild Tahitian hymn. One more, “un grand coup,” and the guests disperse, each having smashed his glass as a time-honoured custom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Soon after noon we are ready to go to Point Venus, the spot where the immortal Cook observed the transit of the planet across the sun’s disc on June 3, 1769, hence the name.

The drive is delightful, and the spot so historical, that on no account should this trip be omitted. Moreover, you will see the country and a good deal of native life outside the town. But we must hire a buggy.

Come along, let’s go to Tati Salmon. He keeps a private livery stable, and will do all that is necessary. His spacious bungalow is close to Lavina’s. He, also, loves dollars, so do his sons, just a trifle too much, and a bargain in writing is necessary. Nevertheless, he’s a real good sort, a man whom we cannot do else than esteem, and of royal lineage. The Salmons and the Pomares have relationship similar to that which existed between the Stewarts and the House of Brunswick. Tati is known to all as “Tati”—no disrespect. He promised us his

\* Adapted from Pope’s “Homer.”

photograph for reproduction, but native pride, combined with modesty, precluded the fulfilment. He's just got up from mid-day siesta, and asks us to enter, but we cannot remain—just time to note those pretty bed quilts, wrought in patchwork with consummate skill and peculiar to Tahiti and the adjacent islands.

Alas, that *jalousie* should be in fair Tahiti. To some, the mention of Tati will cause a shrug and an awry look that means mischief. But a man is honest till found to be a rogue; never forget that. Prove all things, pay no attention to idle tales, and remember that the *true* Tahitian is at least a gentleman.

The buggy is ready—nine Chile dollars for the trip to Point Venus—and off about one o'clock, pulled by two little ponies, with rope traces, full of vim and locally bred.

We take the Eastern Broom Road, passing Jardin Raoul and the private residence of the Governor closely adjacent.

The garden is named after its founder and original master, who, himself an ardent botanist, acclimatized many beautiful palms\* and tropical plants from the West Indies, Mauritius, and elsewhere, and here they are in all their glory. The garden, however, is about to be closed to the public, and to be incorporated with the domain of Monsieur le Gouverneur, and is officially attached to the Chamber of Agriculture.

The foliage of the banana, o'ertopped by the palms, is a perfect panorama the whole length of the way.

Here comes a funeral; the hearse, a small open vehicle, with women behind in loose black *saeques*. By law, a funeral can never take place until twenty-four hours have elapsed from death. How different to the thing with the hideous plumes so prevalent in British countries! 'Tis covered with garlands of

\* *Oreodoxia regia*, *latunia bourbonica*, *cocos flexuosa*, *corypha australis*, *phœnix* var., etc.

the choicest tropic flowers, typical of the soul's flight to the gardens of paradise.

\* \* \* \* \*

Look at the mountains in the afternoon sun, as we drive along. Sometimes in their many moods they appear sullen and broody, but to-day the lights and shadows are simply marvellous. The lower slopes, ribbed by volcanic action, speak clearly enough of the crumpling and contracting Earth as the cooling process of the planet progressed. Perhaps nowhere is this better illustrated.

What thoughts these mountain spurs set a-vibrating! Instinctively, the soul goes back some 900,000,000 of years ago, when this planet of ours was hurled off from the sun in a state of white heat and began to cool off. With the eye of the spirit we can see the cosmic material of which it is composed bubbling and spluttering like the ridges in a sailor's pitch-pot. The ranges are upheaving, the valleys forming; we survey like a flash the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, and Tertiary eras, the evolution of being from protoplasm to man. We ken the time when that ancient continent, of which Tahiti is a remnant, abounded in life-types quaint and grotesque. And some voice, as of thunder, upwells from the Ego, "Before yon mighty ocean rolled—before yon mountains lifted their heads on high, *you and I were*. Mind and Force rule the Cosmos; electricity and radium are emanations from the Master-Soul, who maintains all things; the duration of Earth from birth to death is not as a second on the mighty 'clock' of the Eternal Universe."

See, there goes a priest bound home from catechism!

Look at those spurs *now*, covered with dense fern and scrubby bush. They are gleaming in the light. Cloud-shadows follow, chasing along from rib to rib, while soft wreathing cloudlets, like fleeces of Gideon, float over the spurs.



FUNERAL COSTUMES, TAHITI.

[Coulon, photo.]

See that bluff standing out above, black as an imp by the very contrast after a mountain shower. There is a portion of a double rainbow spanning that gorge. The natives call the one, *Ó tane*, the man; and the reflected bow, *Ó vahine*, the woman. Just as it should be—is it not? Look at the deep chasms and sombre gullies buried in gloom in sharp silhouetting, looking like porticoes of Dante's Inferno, while the highest prominence visible from the road is Aorai, 6195 feet, and covered as with unscoured wool in a pall of heavy cumulonimbus cloud frowning and sullen below.

When free from cloud, the great precipices, sheer down for hundreds of feet, look appalling; and imagine the fate of a mountain climber losing his footing! Vast scope for an Alpine Club here! Then again are patches of red volcanic soil midway on the ribs, and such, glowing in the sun, form together a tableau so striking that the pen is powerless. In clear weather and at break of day Aorai looks superb, thrown against the sky in shades awful and almost divine.

Why *do* not artists come to Tahiti? The tones of Venice, combined with the richest flushes of India, are awaiting as virgins for the painter's brush.

\* \* \* \* \*

Still on along the Broom Road we notice a gap, known as the Fautau Gorge, in the mountains, with rugged pinnacles jutting up in the distance as from an enormous chasm. Such form "The Diadem." The highest *aiguille* is 3990 feet above sea, and into that wild region were the Government archives taken when, during the Fashoda trouble, the French feared an invasion of Tahiti. But more of that presently.

So onwards; and what studies for the botanist! There are some fine araucarias. See those tall hedges of *acalypha*, a species of nettle bush without the sting. Europeans call it the false coffee tree, and the natives, *tafeie*. Some of the



[Coulon, photo.]

SUGAR-CANE.

leaves have gorgeous tints, variegated in green to bronze and blood red. There is sugar-cane, yonder vanilla, then a coffee plantation, next pineapples. Tall cotton trees, with hanging pods and spines on the trunks, arrest attention, looking gaunt and thin amidst the palms and breadfruit.

There are some cattle, the first we have seen. And look at the fences—two rows of barbed wire half-hitched round mere sticks which act as posts!

Ducorron's telephone line runs overhead, fixed by tie-wires to trees on each side.

"A railway," did you say? Nothing of the kind, save portable lines on the two-foot gauge running to plantations, and used also for ballast work in maintaining the road. Much as a line is desired round the island, the project is subservient to the mail subsidy, which gives the five-weekly steamer service with San Francisco, by which communication with Europe can be accomplished in twenty-one days. Remember that!—just a delightful trip for the tired-out citizen of "Lonetena," as London is called in Tahitian. This accounts for the vast number of bicycles and buggies, most of which are imported from San Francisco.

The natives are adepts in the art of cycling. Two lads may be noted riding one machine, the one abaft the peddler with a big load balanced across the shoulders. Motors have also been introduced.

Notice ere we reach the village of Arue\* the many charming villas. These are mainly the residences of white merchants, who drive to and from Papeete daily. The horses, like those of Rarotonga, are staunch little animals of a stock introduced from South America in the early days.

But what is most striking, next to the superb vegetation and glimpses of sea filtered in between, are the native houses,

\* A piece of native music is named after this place.



clustering under breadfruit, and shaded by bananas in humble but quiet peace, “Free from care and pain” ; just the retreat for some aged man weary of the world and all its ways to end his days in. In principle the style resembles that of the Rarotongan hut, but the finish is superior. The bamboo sticks forming the walls, and allowing the cool winds to play over the sleeper, are neater and fresher ; and the palm or pandanus leaves comprising the roof are dexterously plaited and laid on with infinite care, supported by *bourau* or hibiscus rafters.

Tahiti, as aforesaid, is well watered by the extensive rainfall on the mountains, and many rivulets are on our route.

Crossing some of these numerous streams, observe the women in brightest garb, washing and beating out the clothes with a big round pin, putting one in mind of similar scenes in Java. Clothes’ pegs are unknown ; they just hang their *sacques* and their husband’s *pareus* on a line and trust to luck, or lay them on the ground to dry in the sun. Some are sheltered while washing by thatch huts, others care not, and are fully exposed.

“Is washing expensive ?”

Why, no ; twenty cents (or *4d.*) is the proper charge for a lady’s starched dress ; unstarched articles cost ten cents, even to a handkerchief, but people not knowing are liable to imposition by those who are not pure Tahitians.

There’s pretty Tevaite laving her tresses and combing them out with taper fingers, and yonder a man husking cocoanuts on a pointed stick—all such, and many others, are unique subjects for the snapshot camera.

As instancing how pleasant is a dip in a rivulet cavern, we may mention that the temperature of the water is between 68 and 75 degrees.

\* \* \* \* \*

About halfway to Point Venus we make a short detour down a narrow lane towards the beach, where is the sepulchral

monument erected to King Pomare. It is a pyramidal building of coral, subscribed to by the people, and surmounted by a gruesome and blood-red funereal urn. Below is a big P and crown also painted red, with pillars and portico of the same bright colour, looking odd and strangely suggestive.

In the chinks and crevices delicate ferns extend their slender fronds to the sunlight, the "hart's tongue" of the Pacific being a feature.

A great rusty chain surrounds the pile, and around are hibiscus trees and casuarinas, and through the tasseled foliage of the latter the trade wind, howling, makes weird music, mingling with the swish of the lapping waves. The pink and white periwinkles blooming beside in the full flush of life are the *vinca alba* and *vinca rosea*, both natives of Mauritius.

Now, even a flower in a certain spot will strike mental chords that otherwise were dumb. Even as Pomare is "dead," so will they "die."

"Death!" forsooth; what is it? Nought but a *change*.

And some small voice, a phantom-emissary of the Power Supreme, whispers in the ear, "Know that nothing is lost in Nature; the whole Universe and everything in it hath two sides, the *spiritual* and the *physical*. That notion of the permanent dissipation of energy is wrong; it is a change of form; out of dissipation comes re-birth; variety untold reigns in the spheres. Man! the Cosmos is Immortal from the tiniest protoplasm to the giant suns. *There was no beginning; there is no end*; Nature is a perennial future. NUMBER ONE, in dual form, rules INFINITY."

Well, what about Pomare's body, think you? Is *it* lying "wrapped in the cold embraces of the tomb," enclosed by loving natives in some shell, in this ugly Golgotha?

Not a bit of it! Once, yes. But Tahitians came by stealth and took it away in the dead of night, tied round



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

KING POMARE'S MONUMENT.

with hibiscus—great strapping fellows—and carried it off, as report hath it, away up into yon mysterious mountains, and there left it to mummify in some cave kissed by the clouds, nearer, they thought, to that God that gave it life. None but they know where it rests, and the secret is for ever locked up in the native soul.

Pomare originally came from the Paumotus, and was adopted into Tahiti by the chief of Arue, this very district in which we now are, about 1750.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mark that quaint church close by, with that cordon of palm trees singing in the breeze a lyric *himine*, that tabernacle inscribed with the words, "TE FETIA POIPOI ANAANA," which, interpreted, means, "The bright morning star."

It is a general "Protestant" place of worship.

Thanks to the missionaries who ousted the old native god Taaroa,\* with his wife Hina,\* and his eldest son Oro,\* dubbed by the Tahitian, "The Sovereign of the World," the religions of Tahiti are now included in two great sects, Catholic and Protestant; and as if the native mind were not sufficiently mystified by this arrangement, the latter comprises sundry subdivisions, including even Mormonism.

In this building a worthy Seventh Day Adventist of "The Church of God" † discoursed to a bewildered congregation in terms of the following syllabus, with which he kindly supplied us, and which we give letter by letter. Here it is—

"The END of the world, is it near? Or the Second Coming of Christ—Russian Policy and Bible Prophecy—Lord Roberts and General Kuropatkin on the Invasion of India—Indications of a Coming Struggle—The Millennium, a Fable—Earth desolated—Harvest reaped—The Anti-Christ—Is he a Napoleon?—The Gospel which Paul preached, or that Christ died on Wednesday

\* See Chapter VII.

† Referred to first on p. 140.

and Rose on Saturday (1 Cor. xv. 1, 4)—The TRINITY, a Popish Dogma, ‘To us there is but ONE GOD’ (1 Cor. vi.)”

If, after such a bombardment, this Church does not become historical in the annals of Tahiti, then it has no claim to fame. The discourses on these momentous questions were to have been given in the market at Papeete, but the Governor refused consent, fearing that it would cause a religious war.

Ghost of Taaroa ! Shade of Sweet Hina ! If those natives who heard the addresses aforesaid in this immortal church can retain balance of mind and be as happy as before with their pet pigs and gentle loves of all people on this planet, they are the most to be envied.

But if the Salvation Army were to come with drum and tambourine, the volatile natives, with souls full of music, would go mad with delight at the first performance. All other sects would begin to make leeway, and the grand old “General” of “Blood and Fire” would, by the trumpet alone, score his greatest and proudest victory, taking Tahiti practically by storm. Only, he must hunt for the “devil,” and leave hell alone ; and—well !—Monsieur le Gouverneur might object.

\* \* \* \* \*

Come along, we must away, or night will be on ere we get back to Papeete. Remember, we are in the tropics, and the earth’s rotation is faster. The sun rapidly rises and sets, and there is but little twilight, rising between 5.20 and 6.35 a.m., and setting between 6.39 and 5.28 p.m. between December and June respectively.

If we are caught driving to town after dark without a buggy-light, look out for squalls ; some gendarme will drop down sure as fate, and all the dollars, and maybe pounds besides, will go in one act under *peine d’amende*.

“What should we do in such an event ?” you ask. Why, go forthwith to “L’étude de Monsieur Auguste Goupil, Défenseur,

à Papeete." Some people say he is the most able *avocat* in all *les établissements Français de l'Océanie*, south of the Line, and virtue personified. We cannot doubt it. Others declare he's first cousin to Satan, and went to South America to serve his master. But if any can get a client out of a scrape and prove the contrary to *ignorantia juris non excusat*, he's the



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

CAPTAIN COOK'S MEMORIAL, POINT VENUS.

man. Next to the Governor, he has practically most power, and likes to conserve money within the country for inter-circulation.

Passing a wayside shrine, and *les boîtes aux lettres* nailed to the trees, the ascent of the hill begins that overlooks the famous Matavai Bay, where Cook landed in 1769, and the scenery becomes more varied.

The ferns are more and more beautiful with every turn of the road, and white convolvulus\* runs in lavish beauty. The

\* The native *ipomæa*.



LIGHTHOUSE, POINT VENUS.

[Coulon, photo.]

purple ageratum is a weed, the *tradescantia*, or *commelyna*, almost a pest. Avenues of mango trees overhang the way, whence, if in season, we can freely eat.

At length we reach the crest of the bluff, and pause to admire. The panorama of "reef and palm" looking seawards, with the tints of the water, Eimeo in the distance, and thatches of the natives in the depths below, beggars description.

Descending on the other side and turning to the left near the stone marking nine kilomètres, we pass through vanilla plantations, and see the vines trailing in the bush, over moss-covered posts, logs, up trees, or anywhere the tendrils can gain a hold. The shells\* of two kinds of land-snail may be noted adhering to the leaves.

Near the Catholic Church, on the left, Cook planted a tamarind tree. We find it not, and are told it is dead.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Point Venus at last! We glimpse the lighthouse, through the palms, a tower 72 feet high. The light is *fixed white*, and is visible at sea for 15 miles.

But a few yards away is the Cook Monument, pillar and ball, surrounded by iron railing. We approach and read the immortal tablet:—

"This Memorial, erected by Captain James Cook to commemorate the observation of the transit of Venus, June 3, 1769, was restored and fenced by the local administration at Tahiti; and this plate was placed here by the Royal Society and the Royal Geographical Society in 1901."

'Tis fifty yards from the edge of the beach. Around are the *bourau* trees, pandanus, and cocoanuts; red oleander gives bright colour, woodlice and earwigs lie under the stones, couch grass forms a pleasant sward, yellow peas are all abloom, ants everywhere, centipedes in logs, and flies at attention,

\* For names, see Appendix.



while brown-spotted butterflies flit about, and big yellow wasps are building their nests—and, lo! we have seen the spot, a spit of land haunted by land-crabs, and famed for ever in the history of the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Returning, we reach Papeete by six o'clock, and dine for a change at a Chinese restaurant.

Afterwards, if the date suits, we may attend the Philharmonic Society's excellent concert at the old Queen's Palace. M. Vermeersch is director, the "Manns" of the South Pacific. The scene in the compound on these occasions is unique; the bright dresses of the girls, the smart uniforms of French officers, the little tables of fruit-sellers lit with fairy lights, the love-making, the foliage, all combine to stamp on the mind an evening in Tahiti.

And now "Good night." You'll be glad to turn in, like a crab to its hole, there to ruminate, to digest and assimilate the events of the day. Aged ocean roars o'er the caverns of the reefs and will lull you to sleep.

## CHAPTER VI

*Second Day.* The Beach : Inter-island Schooners—Marine Life—Gun-boat Studies—A South Sea Dentist—A Philosophising “Crusoe.” The Fautaua Valley : The “Fashoda” Incident—Eyes and no Eyes—A Contrast—Native Hospitality—Bathing Extraordinary—The Old, Old Story—Notes by the Way—Arcadian Pleasures. The Hills : Nature Studies—A Native Carrier—The “Staubach” in Tahiti—Nature’s Music—Soldiers at Play—The Governor’s Asylum. Return to Papeete : Sunset over Eimeo—Tahitian Barbers—Evening in a Suburban Village.

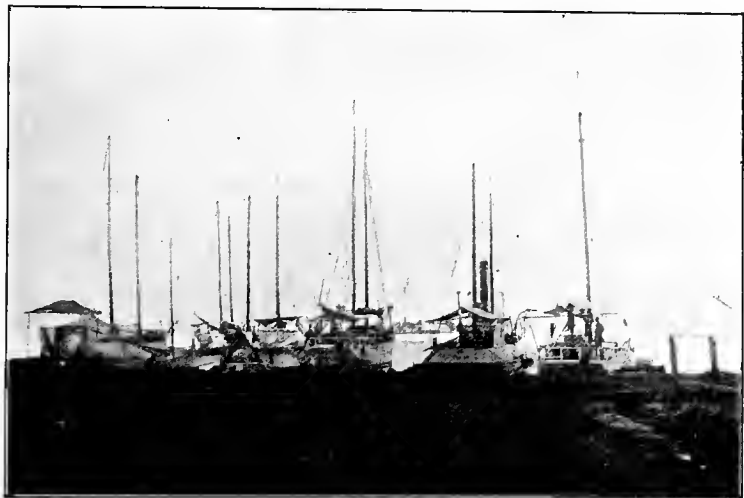
AWAKE at 4.30, and off at 5 o’clock for coffee at the Chinaman’s.

The cats and roosters disturbed your sleep? You’ll get over it. Quite forgot to mention that the climate of Tahiti has a powerful effect on the tom-cat and domestic cock. Night to them is just as day. The head of the tom is somewhat triangular, the tail may be longer than his body, he’s a splendid ratter, while the rooster grows to a size unequalled. Latitude again! Ah well! never mind.

Now for a stroll by the Quai du Commerce and Quai des Subsistances by the water side. Schooners from the Paumotus are lazily at anchor. A pretty sight they are. Some have come with cargoes of pearl shell, others with coprah for yonder ship bound to Marseilles. And there is the *Gauloise* in from Raiatea, the *Haamite* from Penrhyn, and the *Taravao* from Huaheine. The crews are away—down at the grog shop, and dollars go spattering in Lambert’s lee scuppers, while women

and girls lounge on the strand and await the new dresses that go in rum. Labour is dear, and making limejuice does not pay.

Pretty, too, to watch the little vessels coming in or going out. The milk-white canvas bellies in the breeze, and their outlines are tinted with the prismatic colours in certain favour-



ISLAND SCHOONERS AT PAPEETE.

[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

able atmospheric conditions when a mile or two from the shore. Colour effects in these latitudes are perfectly marvellous.

Note the echini or sea urchins \* with their long sharp spines clinging to the rocks. The *echinodermata* are well represented. Some have *aiguilles* variegated, and striped in colours fit for natural selection; others black spikelets six inches long. Woe! should you tread on one with naked feet. Then there is a big sea urchin called *fetuch*, much relished and clad with

\* See Appendix.

great *spiculæ*, thick and blunted ; baskets full may be bought in the market. Follow good example, and bottle some in alcohol.

Watch those blue minnows called *mamo*, darting 'neath the rocks, and catch one if you can. Some are deep ultramarine. Even the natives can rarely capture them, and when they do they are esteemed a delicacy, and promptly eaten. What would be given for such gems in aquaria ! There goes a sea-snake, banded in yellow ; and down by that coral lump is the sluggish *bêche de mer*.\*

As for the sea shells, it is impossible to do more in the short stay than collect a few and buy others from the fishermen. These waters in mollusca are particularly rich. One may instance many kinds of *cypræa* ; and others among the gastropods include *mitra*, *cassis*, *harpa*, *terebra*, *strombus*, *dolium*, *ptero-cera*, *neritina*, *turbo*, etc., etc., in specific variety. The *pelecypods*, or bivalves, include the beautiful pearl shell, † *pecten*, *arca*, *mytilus*, small species of the *tridacna*, or clam family (in myriads all round the island), and more. The collector should stay between steamers, and go out on the reefs. Some species are found in the early morning when the weather is calm ; others at the time of new moon, and that wonderful thing that men call instinct—a sparklet-flash from the Mind of God—tells these creatures when Picard ‡ is catching the light, when gradients of the barometer are easing off.

And the varieties of crabs are just as numerous, from the monster that climbs the cocoa-nut palm to the hermit and crabling nestling in the sand, their colours as wonderful as those of the fish.

\* Dried *bêche de mer* brings thirty cents Chile per kilo. The soup is considered a great delicacy.

† More abundant in the Paumotus.

‡ A craterlet on the "Sea of Crises" in the Moon.

**Missing Page**

**Missing Page**

dollars with a touch of benevolence, he is the type of old “Hard Nails” and island racket. “I’m a graduate of Harvard, and Tahiti was my hunting-ground once,” says he, “but chase didn’t last. Guess I found fate sure as a meteorite pulled to the sun. Good wife, you know—that settles a man—and grandchildren thick as seeds from a mango-tree.”

“Come, I’ll introduce you,” he continues. “She’s just come up from my place at Mataiea.”

The lady is a very queen, an empress mature of Tahitian blood, with the sweetest face of sixty years possible to imagine—full of kindness, the essence of benevolence, charity, and love! May God bless her! He, himself, is hospitable to a fault, but scally-wag dead-beats with aching molars have made him cautious. Professional charges are threefold in excess, and the maxim is writ in French and English, “Pay in advance, no tick here.” *Experientia docet*, nothing more! Just a snapshot of island life.

\* \* \* \* \*

That pretty little island just opposite is Motu Uta, the quarantine station, kept by one Baptiste, an adept in English, French, Spanish, and Italian.

In character he’s original—a cynic, a philosopher.

If you stay, take catamaran and visit him. A cigarette will be ready and a glass of red wine. No seductive Tahitiennes crosses *his* path; once they were legion, now they are *tabu*. A cat and a dog are his only friends.

Baptiste has solved many an *x*, but his mind is worried by two forces in antagonism—dogma and the light of reason.

Listen as he speaks in impassioned tones, facing the mountains, and hands aloft, outstretched to the sky. We heard him one day, and shall never forget it.

“I want TRUTH, and the TRUTH I will have; the two are fighting together. Which of them *is* true? Now is the time

to decide. Am I a fool, or what am I? I *must* know; if I don't know, *who* does? Great God! Thou Inscrutable Force, Thou Infinite Energy, teach me. I feign would rely on the Master Mind; He will not deceive. Am I not part and parcel of Him?" He rambles on and grows in fervour. "They call me atheist. I'm not one. God is in the leaves, the clouds, the planets. Where is He not? I see nothing in Nature left to chance. That Infinite Power *must* direct my destiny, and those of my actions that influence my destiny. There is no such thing as accident. The Master is Manager of 'The Exhaustless Banking Company, Unlimited,' and the more I call on that Bank for strength, the more will be given me. Oh, I can see it all!" And he whistles a tune. "So shall I go on from victory to victory, from joy great to joy greater, from power great to power more and more. 'The parsons,'" he continues, rolling a cigarette, "what do *they* know? Strikes me I'll teach them. Where does the miserable sinner come in? Did I not spring from the Giver of All? Is *He* bad? Great Euclid! listen, here is the *reductio ad absurdum*! I tell you, sir," said he, as we chatted one day, "liberty, glorious liberty, was born with the planet Earth. Away with doctrine! Henceforth I depend on the ONE that gave me air—that gave me light—that implanted reason, divine reason, when I was born. Liberty is the mandate of one's inner self. God is Nature; Nature is God. Vive la République!"

Brave Baptiste! Rest his soul when he passes the Styx!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now to the hills, and a grand time we'll have.

Part way we can drive, and then, leaving the horses leisurely to graze, proceed afoot up the mountain gorge.

There are two other livery stables in Papeete besides Tati's, Lambert's and Poroi's, and as we wish to cause no ill-feeling, we'll distribute our favours and go to Lambert. He also,



remember, keeps the grog-shop. Poroi shall have his turn in course.

By seven o'clock the buggy is ready with a careful driver. So away! Provisions are needless. Take tinned meat if you wish from the Tinto's store, but fruit can be got as we go



[Coulon, photo.]

BAPTISTE'S HOME, ISLET OF NOTU UTA.

along, and, if you like, we'll eat with the natives. "Be one with the people;" "When in Rome, do as Rome does." These are maxims that no enlightened traveller should ever forget.

Again taking the Eastern Broom Road for two kilomètes, we turn sharp to the right up the Fautaua valley, following the course of the sparkling stream. "Le Diadème," those *aiguilles* of volcanic rock, pointing skywards in majestic

profile between the stern mountains, is right ahead, looking like some imposing fortress.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yesterday we referred to what may be called the "Fashoda Incident," and the time is now opportune to relate to you the circumstances of that startling episode, famous in the annals of Tahiti, though not recorded in the *Annuaire*. The people quickly tell the tourist all about it, and the French are too sensible to treat it other than in humour.

When it was thought that trouble would eventuate between Great Britain and France, owing to the zeal of Major Marchand in the Soudan, the Governor and his officers were all alert. Some Mentor from Lhasa, on the Astral Plane, advised them of events by telepathic current, working quadruplex over the ocean, beside which the performances of the Pacific Cable for rapid transmission pale into insignificance. Thus they knew more than Lord Salisbury in London, and nerves were at the utmost tension.

Imagine the consternation when one balmy evening some zealot, refreshed with bush beer, reported to the Governor that two British frigates were approaching Papeete under cover of Eimeo and the shades of night.

Jehoshaphat! If Orohena had burst as Vesuvius over Pompeii, or the angel Gabriel made Tahiti his footstool, there couldn't have been greater consternation. "Les Anglais! Les Anglais!"

The people were in terror and took to flight, hornets were a-buzzing round the Consul's head. *Le Gouverneur* at dinner swallowed his claret. Down fell the glass from a trembling hand.

"Au Cabinet, immédiatement! Mon Dieu! Sapristi! Appelez le Commandant, avisez le Commissariat!"

Never was such a bother. Buggies and traps went

helter-skelter, bedding dropped out and was left behind, whilst discarded garments of affrighted people were lying everywhere. Meantime the Governor was formulating a plan for the general safety. The warship was dismantled, masts unrigged, and all was ready to scuttle this single vessel. Her guns were taken to Faere Hill, commanding the *passé*, in a desperate effort to save the town. Point Venus light was extinguished—so were the leading lamps marking the passage, while military cadets were despatched as lookouts all round the island.

The fiat went forth from the *Sécrotariat-Général* that not a light was to be lit in all the town, that every one must hide in the Fautaua ravine.

The girls in the market-place stayed their soulful music, the accordion was dumb; out went the lamps; the very mosquitoes smelt mischief. The land-crabs let go their *bourau* leaves and sought their holes as the people rushed about. Some naturalized renegades secretly wished that, with morning light, the "Jack" would be floating over the capital.

"Les Archives! les Archives!" went sounding through the palace.

"Au grosier de Fautaua! Les Archives au Diadème, mon Dieu! mais dépêchez-vous," exclaimed the Governor.

The cry was passed from lip to lip; *le grand escalier* shook with vibration. Out through the compound went the echo, "Les Archives!" The clubs shut down, and dice lay scattered around the verandahs; Chinamen stopped a-making coffee and doused the glimmer; *le maire* arose and stowed his wife, while yet trying to pacify the mob.

Down the Broom Road and up the Fantaua Gorge officials scrambled, from *Gouverneur* to *garçon*, with those precious documents, followed by the citizens carrying money-bags and seven van loads of provisions, while gangs of natives brought up the rear.

On they went along this very road by which we are now travelling, and so into the mountains by a one-foot track, plodding and sweating from stem to stern. Soon we shall follow it.

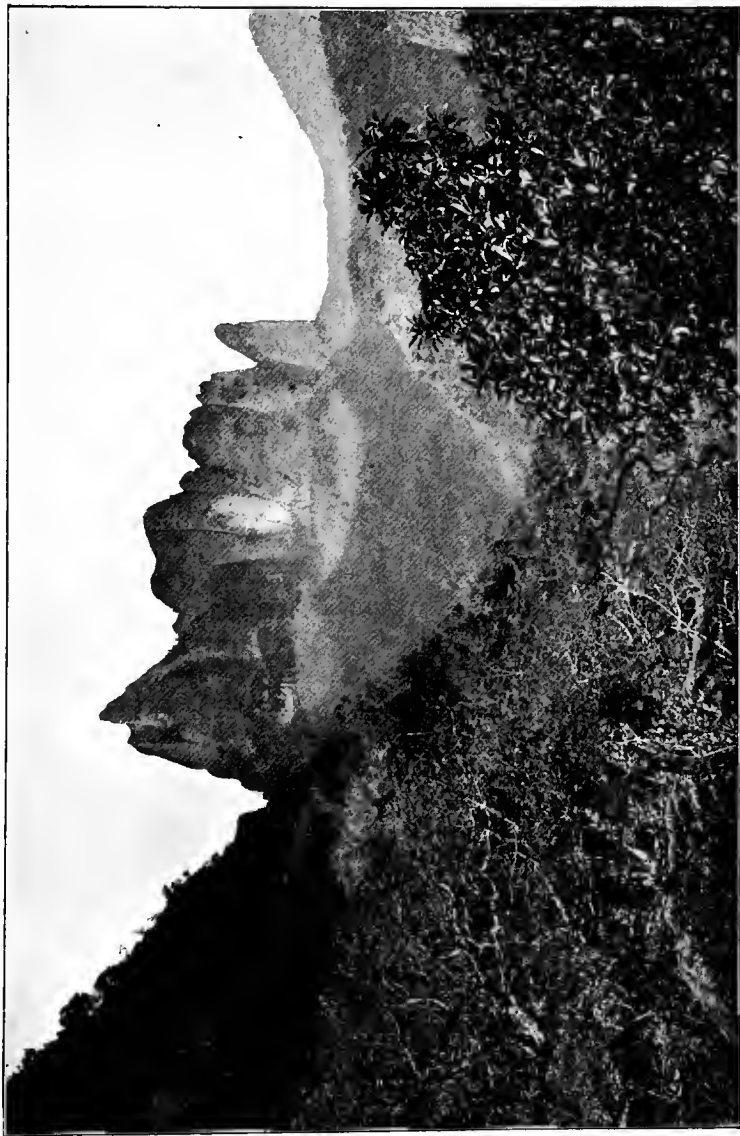
Midst jungle and creepers along they went in single file, a great procession, like a march to some holy shrine—past chasm and precipice, where tropic birds build and cascades tumble to depths below, until they reached a place of safety, high on a bluff, whence stones could be hurled at old “John Bull” and England defied with all her guns.

Judge the surprise when an officer of marine came that way, smiling within’ards but solemn without, and informed the Governor that ’twas all a hoax; that the man who had sighted those ships of war saw the innocent riding lights of two schooners instead, which he mistook for the British Squadron. So you see, good friend, this road is historical.

\* \* \* \* \*

What pleasures to those who have eyes to see and will only use them!

The country, as we proceed, decidedly recalls Scotland. The frowning mountains, wreathing clouds along the steeps, and the gurgling burn of the Fautaua, all remind one of the Land of Burns. The vegetation alone dispels the illusion. “Scotland in the tropics,” if one may be allowed the expression, is all we can compare the scenery to. Cattle bells tinkle in the pastures. The flora is much as before, perhaps, if anything, more striking, for as we go the road narrows and the gorge deepens. Five different sizes of cocoanuts in various stages of growth may be seen on one palm. The wild passion-vine climbs by the wayside in full flower; its white star-like blossoms, with purple centre, are to the children as angels’ “kisses.” That creeping weed with the pretty blue bloom, called by the French, “l’herbe de vâche,” the *tradescantia* of



[F. Homes, photo.]

“LES ARCHIVES AU DIADÈME,” HEAD OF THE FAUTAUA GORGE.

the botanist, is everywhere. Bohenia trees also thrive, flowering profusely in October. The natives make a lotion from the young leaves, and use it for sores and bad eyes; and they *know* the value of herbal medicine.

In the ambush of the valley the fern growth is splendid. Immense bananas bank the way, arching it over into a shady avenue. Mingling with the wild orange, the broad-leaved taro, and graceful acalypha are coffee and vanilla, growing like weeds; and mosses and lichens adorn the rocks where nimble lizards play and rills of water tumble down.

We call to mind the swinging stanza—

“Down in the deep recesses of the wood,  
Before his eyes his goddess mother stood,”

and can almost imagine the form of Hina, the goddess of Tahitian folk-lore, standing on yon moss-clad rock by the bubbling water blessing us as we go. And the air is so insidiously stimulating, and the odour of the bush so penetrating, that we cease to wonder at the apathy of the natives with respect to the outside world. What know they about General Kuropatkin?

\* \* \* \* \*

Realize, if you can, the greatest contrast the world can produce at this very present—Manchuria and Tahiti. Think of it all as we drive along, up this happy valley of the Fautau river!

Look at yon picture. Man killing man with a slaughter *unthinkable*, the roar of the guns and devilish din, the sable fumes, the ruddy fire! Witness the bursting of the shrapnel shells, the cruel splinters spreading anguish and death, the streaming blood, the slippery ground! Behold the bodies in dripping bits—heads, arms, legs, fingers! Ugh! entrails gushing, flesh steaming, reeking, rotting. Ugh! ugh! There's Poi



THE AUTHOR IN ELYSIUM.

[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

Arthur, hell's abyss; corpse on corpse, stench suffocating, fever rampant. Oh! see, listen! the thud of that bayonet, dull yet crisp, as it twists in the breast and grinds a rib! God have mercy! Think of the wife, could she witness it! Oh, my love, my husband! See the wretch, as down he falls in agony untold, clutching the earth and gnawing the soil, as with toes embedded against a spit and mouth agape, his bleaching eye turns to the sky, and with one big gasp, "The soul comes floating in a tide of gore." What for? And children cry, "Father! Where's daddy, darling daddy?" Hunger rages, thirst pathetic. And the devil's at the helm, and hell's afloat—"clew up your royals and let her rip"—hell, beside which the phantoms of Calvin are as protoplasm to the King! And the Czar in state, a *Christian* man, sends forth his ukase and oaths thuswise:—

"So long as a rouble is left in all the Russias, so long as a man exists fit to *stab*—able to sever a main artery—so long, by Heaven, shall this war last!" Great God!

Presto! pass! with the flash of the electric spark. A valley in Tahiti!

A hut is yonder, walled with bamboo and thatched with palm leaves. Twining around it are vines and flowers; pigeons are cooing their loves in the dovecot, and the river sings in a rushing burr. On the roof is the family mess-pot, shaped like the kava bowl so common in Fiji. The noble Tahitian, master of the place and Nature's own gentleman—premier earl of the whole Pacific—stands at the gate in wreath and *pareu*. His stalwart limbs are those of Apollo—"Haeremai!" "Come hither, good friends; all that I have is thine—the best of all my house can afford." We go. He calls together all his kin. "See! I am blessed; how great is the honour! The white strangers have deigned to enter." "Yarana! Yarana!" resounds from the grove and echoes back from the valley.



“Ten thousand welcomes!” All is sweet peace, unbounded love, the Czar of Russia a negative quantity. Milton’s Ghost!—’tis Paradise regained. Children approach with dimpled chin and a laughing smile, holding aloft the wee



[Coulton, photo.]

SOFT EYES AND BLACK HAIR.

brown hand, others present offerings of fruit. There a wife with a sucking babe.

“And she, when slumber seals his eye,  
This watchful mother, wafts the playful fly.”

Soft-eyed girls, with long black hair all down the back,

bustle around and prepare a meal. Some are plump as little doves, and not 5 feet high. Our hands were scratched by that lantana; balm is ready to soothe the skin. Health and beauty go hand in hand; the air is filled with subtle scent. Greenest leaves form the table, choicest fern-wreaths crown the head; and as we eat the sweetest pork, the tender chicken, with taro for bread and *feis* for meal, we murmur a grace with grateful heart, and drink the milk from the spreading palm, thanking the Lord for the privilege of life. Then the accordion and a native hymn. The hospitality of our host knows no bounds; and if we reject him as father for the time, his sons as brothers, we leave this haven impressed by the visit, knowing that Heaven is not a myth, but here on earth in a Tahitian glade.

And what is the present belief of this patrician man—this offspring of the foodful land—so simple and grand as he bids us adieu? Pagan no more. Christianity has softened his susceptible brain on his own model, though wrangling sects and revised versions still puzzle him. In essence 'tis this: "We should love as brethren and slay not. Worship Nature, obey her laws. Use God's gifts. God made man and God made woman. All His works are good. Be cheerful, be happy. Yarana!"

Those who think that Tahitians are uncivilized will soon be compelled to change their minds.

One thinks a lot, and Major Umphank comes to memory—met him, you know, some months ago. Even yet one hears his voice, harsh and discordant as the Australian crow.

"The dirty coloured man, the filthy alien, fitted alone for the white man's slave. One of 'em stole my *paté de foie gras*. Thieves all. Damn them! Here, steward! a whisky and soda, and a little sandwich of deviled ham."

Following up the Fautaua valley, we pass the spot whence is derived the main water storage, *le prix d'eau* of Papeete. The supply comes straight from the mountains, and from here is carried by pipes to the town. No fear of typhoid in the nectar of the gods! A little farther is a natural basin in the river-bed called Puertehu. Here French officers bathed their girls, sportive in the water like laughing dolphins, with no conception of indecorum. When the road was being made and water-pipes laid, the place was frequented by all Papeete.

Notice the quantities of yellow teocoina, mingling with lantana, in full flower (*Tecoma stans*). We believe it is indigenous to Tahiti; in some parts of the island it grows in rankest luxuriance. In Australia it is valued as a choice exotic, and sold at two shillings a pot. A slender kind of sow thistle grows by the wayside; some use it for salad.

We proceed with difficulty in the buggy, owing to the narrowing road which in part is banked by wall of lava. White convolvulus is twining rampant.

The trunks of the trees are carved with names of love. Same old story! Here sat Veiva kissed by Riro; there did Aita plight her troth, veiled in the fragrance of cocoanut oil.

More bananas vault the way, lights and shadows dance on the leaves, orchids deck the trees, butterflies\* and dragon flies sip ambrosia, and down in the thicket spatters the luscious music of the sparkling burn, overhung with the ferns and taro. The very broad leaves are those of the *ape*, or wild taro, belonging, of course, to the arum family. They may reach nearly 3 feet in diameter. The juice of this leaf stings the flesh, and may create a sore; but the tuber-like roots are eaten as vegetables, and carried to market on brawny shoulders—great,

\* Three kinds are prevalent in the island; brown, variegated in blue and white, and a small and large red species. Night moths are of many kinds, including a delicate pure white variety.

heavy loads on the bamboo pole. Some of the fern fronds are 10 feet long. What splendid luxuriance!

In the depths of the caverns, o'ertrailed by creepers, may be found a little black fish called *oovu*; and haply also the native trout, *nato*, sweet as any caught in the Trent. Then there are gigantic fresh-water prawns, about a foot long all told, and great slimy eels, which the fisherman takes regularly to market. The former are entrapped in long oval baskets and narrow necks made of the fibre of the wild dracena, and the latter with hook and bait.

See the hornet-wasp, indigenous to Tahiti, and as great a pest as the Pacific rat, building his nest. Instinct tells him that the sun is southing, and soon will be vertical.

Yonder is the pineapple growing wild; and look at the lava stones all over the place, with steamholes spluttered in the "pot of Pluto."

We cross some streamlets feeding the river, and, pausing for a drink, discover varieties of fresh-water shells, valuable to science, belonging to the *melania* family.

Wood is stacked in cords along the way awaiting a wholesale buyer.

Still the gorge narrows, and the mountains loom in deepening shade. The great Pic du Français is ahead.

We are now in the breeding haunts of the tropic bird, the "bo's'n" of the sailor, and numbers are seen hovering around the bluffs. The body is whitish grey, and the two long feathers of the tail show up sharp, in striking contrast, against the sullen rocks. The natives regard it as a bird of ill-omen.

The yellow flowers of the *bourau*, dried red by the sun, strew the path. The natives use it for making poultices. Don't forget that the *bourau* is the *hibiscus tiliaceus* in botany.



[F. Homes, photo.]

THE FAUTAUA GORGE.

At length we reach the end of the road, and, turning the horses out to feed, leave the buggy under an orange tree.

Proceeding afoot by a pathway we come to a bridge spanning the impetuous torrent, and this we cross ere climbing the steeps. It is facetiously known as "Le Pont Fashoda," and was engineered by the Commandant d'Artillerie, M. Bourgoïn. It is seven kilomètres from the town.

Close beside is a spot under the shade of *tecoma stans*, favoured by the townspeople as a picnic resort. On Sundays, especially, music and revelling fill the chasm. See the great cliffs to southward! The deeps rebound, the rocks remurmur with sounds of fun, as sun-tanned boys and sable girls begirt with *pareus* bathe together in grottoes fit for the Queen of Carthage, while some Æneas strums a mouth organ, and others prepare the genial feast. Oh, Tahiti!

For two miles more, we follow the mountain trail leading towards the Diadem, winding in curves and zigzags in gradual ascent. On clumps of fungus adorning the trees we can whet the knife. Our driver is with us. He discards his hat and dons a fern wreath.

Right here, on this track, went those immortal Archives, more precious than papyrus from the tombs of Thebes. Picture it all—*le Gouverneur* trudging with all his retinue, flagging in weary strain, searching an asylum amid the crags safe from the machinations of "Perfidious Albion"—and realize to the full the exceeding drollery of the whole situation.

The scenery becomes more and more superb with every hundred feet of ascent. The Fautaua cañon is away below; and the precipitous mountains on the opposite side, kissed with clouds and embraced by the tropic birds, look like the portals of some bourne beyond. The ribs and escarpments are clothed in dense bush and a kind of bracken. The air may be thick with the flight of *tecoma* seeds.

There is no game in these hills; indeed, if we except the wild pig and pony which have run riot from the original stock, and are mainly to be found in the fastnesses of the interior, there are no wild animals, and none in any islands of the Society Group.

We hear the twitter of the *omamao* as we toil along through the thicket; haply, too, the note of the *otátúre*—’tis hard to distinguish which. These are the only two warblers Tahiti possesses, and bird-life generally is very scarce. Other native birds are the *oupa*—a green dove; and the *rupe*, also of the pigeon family; the *ruro*, a kind of swallow; the *ao*, a sort of brown shrike which rejoices in solitude, and is aptly called “the moke;” and the *itatai*, a brown fan-tailed bird. Two more, as at present known, complete the indigenous list—the *torca*, belonging to the plovers, and the *otuu*, a small heron or crane; but these last are chiefly found bordering the coast. That bird, like a thrush, with a yellow beak and white-edged wings that we saw round Papeete, strutting about with such an air of importance, is known as the “mina,” and was imported from the Moluccas to kill those infernal big wasps and cattle ticks that are such a nuisance. The Chinese assist this bird in exterminating the wasps, for they eat the larvæ, but won’t tackle the cattle ticks. Two other varieties have been imported from New Caledonia—a turtle dove, and the *pape*, a sort of sparrow. Then there is the *bengali*—to what family he belongs we do not know; and one more, a species of sparrow-hawk, both introduced. The latter has proved a scourge to the rest, and the Government offers two dollars reward for each one killed. All save the hawk are now protected by a wise legislation.

\* \* \* \* \*

The flora somewhat changes with the altitude. Only a few palms are seen—their limit is about 1000 feet—and

they are on some spurs exposed to the sun, and the nuts are of stunted growth. But the mountain banana, or *fei*, flourishes in amazing wealth. To distinguish between the *fei* and banana proper, note the fruit. That of the former, in a huge bunch, grows erect; banana bunches hang down. Again, the trunk of the *fei* is darker-coloured near the base, and the leaves are thicker than those of the latter.

From here the fruit of the *fei* is brought to market by the sturdy hillsmen. We meet one, carrying two huge bunches on that great bamboo stick, poised so deftly across the shoulders, just as we saw him come into the market. Women follow, bedecked with roses. No wonder his skin is notched and scarred by the fearful pressure. Why, the weight of but one bunch is fifty pounds at the very least, and may be more—say, a hundredweight for the load! Yet smiling Ati does not mind it, 'tis just a part of his happy life, and cheerily he goes, humming some wild tune or hymn, and thinks of the piastres each lot will bring. 'Tis *neuf kilomètres au marché*. The soles of his feet are hard as horn, while the fawning mosquito would tackle a jam tin rather than his brawny legs. Imagine the toil! two Chile dollars for a bunch of *feis* down there in the town is little enough. The amount equals *3s. 4d.* for a feat before which even a Sandow would look aghast and bowingly decline. Three times a week is a mule-post by this route to the little garrison away up near the Diadem.

Refreshed by a drink at a crystal rill, we push along. Beside the track are candle-nuts in myriads, fallen from the trees everywhere around us. This fruit of the candle-nut tree, called *tiairi* in Tahitian, is of great use to the natives, who tie the oil-yielding kernels to a stem of a palm leaf, and light them as torches when night-fishing for eels in the Fautaua river.

See the giant passion-vine, generally called the granadilla,





HILLSMAN CARRYING FEIS TO PAPEETE.

[Coulon, photo.]

but *barbadine* by the French, and *parpautini* in Tahitian. It twists and festoons in most lavish plenty. Limes are laden with golden fruit, and up the trees runs a climbing dracena, falling in aiglets over the head. The mosses and lichens are more and more beautiful, and *bourrau* and breadfruit still abound with paw-paws, tecomas, giant arums, wild cannas, and even vanilla.

Take another look at the bird's-nest fern, the *asplenium nidus*; impossible to mistake it! On the long lanceolate leaves will be found the pretty shells\* of the mountain snail. The dark rib of the leaf is used for "interweaving" in pandanus and "straw" hats as an ornamental variation. Trust the natives! They know how to use Nature, and to make the best of her lavish gifts. Then we pass quantities of "bastard canna," the root of which is used for that condiment known as Chinese curry. It is pungent and very bitter.

No fear of snakes—there are none in the island; nothing to harm save centipedes and scorpions, and they are mostly under the rocks or in some hollow log; and spiders, too, great things bigger than the Italian tarantula; and lizards galore, pretty little pets, striped in bronze and electric blue, basking in a sunbeam.

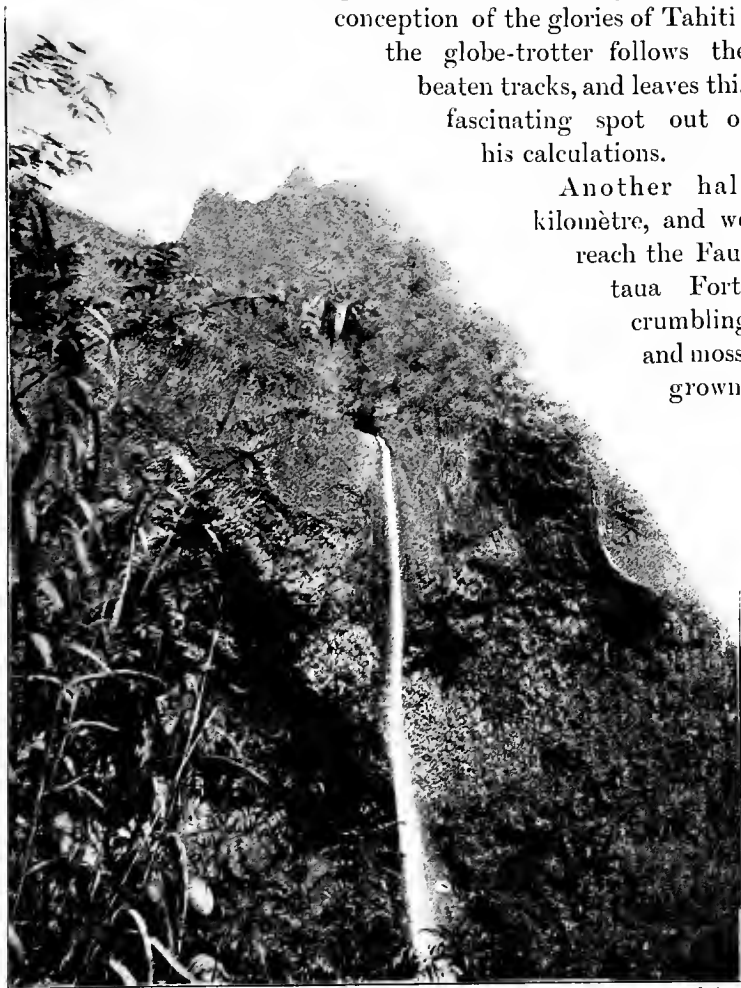
At length we reach the edge of a bluff, overlooking the crevasse of the turbulent river. One shades the eyes and thinks of Switzerland. Why, here is a replica of the famous Staubach, a cascade as beautiful as any in the world! From over that rock tumbles the Fautana in silver streak, full 300 feet sheer down. The bottom of the cascade is reached by a special path leading up the cañon from the Pont de Fashoda. Below, the water foams and hisses after mountain rains in wildest opera; the walls of frowning rock catch up the strain and send it echoing from either side in cavernous bass to notes of treble, as the torrent leaps or softly gurgles in

\* Varieties of *partula*. See Appendix.

the volcanic abyss. Oh, for Padcrewski! What *is* Cook about? Has *he* never heard of this island of the gods?

People don't know; they have no conception of the glories of Tahiti; the globe-trotter follows the beaten tracks, and leaves this fascinating spot out of his calculations.

Another half kilomètre, and we reach the Fautau Fort, crumbling and moss-grown,



[C. J. Wray, photo.]

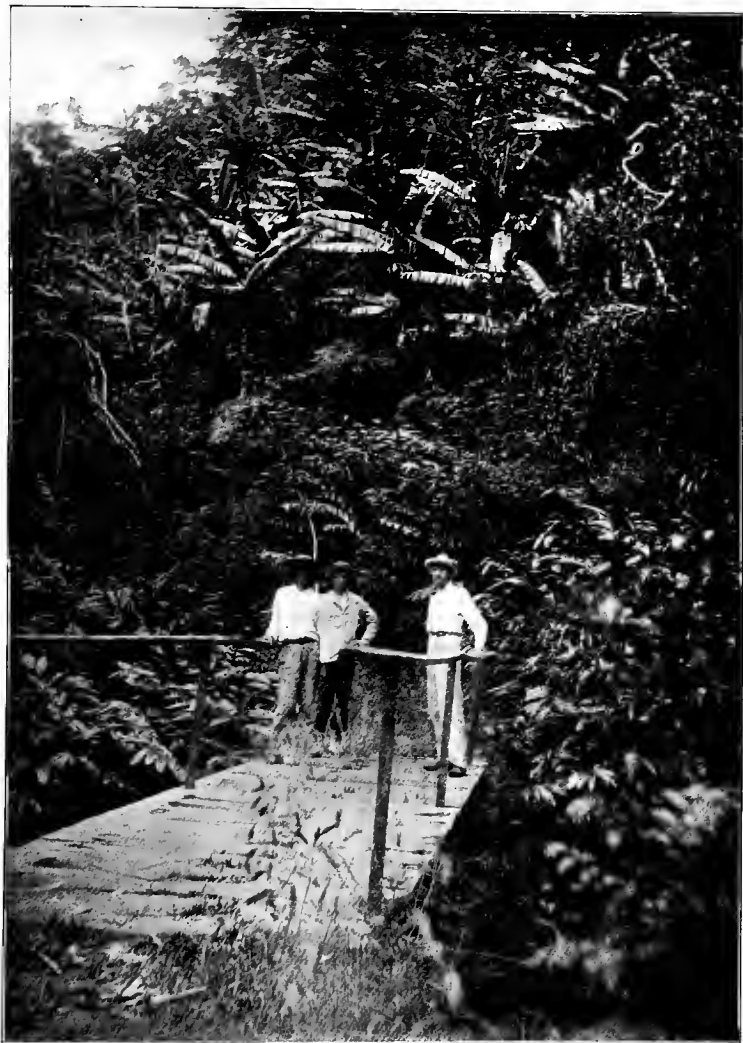
THE FAUTAUA CASCADE—A TAHITIAN “STAUBACH.”

commanding the gorge. The French built this way back in the forties to repel the Tahitians, who resented their presence, prior to the final annexation.

Descending little steps a few yards beyond, and forcing a way by a tiny trail o'ergrown with rank bush and red roses run wild, we come to the river all tearing and blustering above the cascade. Here is a crystal basin, carved from the lava by the chiseling of Nature, and few there are that ken it. From here squirts out the cataract to the terrible chasm away below, singing in baritone as it swishes and curls through a rock-grooved funnel. Shower-drops of water, spattering on the pool from those blufflets above, all dressed in clusters of fern and dracena, blatter in rhythm like the swing of a metronome; rullets yield semitones and gamuts of treble; the plunge of the water from crest to furrow, leaping the boulders and then re-gurgling in the hollow beneath, gives bass and contralto in an opera of the elements evolved from the spirit of the Master Musician, while the air, expanding and rushing from the cañon, shakes castanets of quivering leaves to the extravaganza of the Soul of all that Is. Here one can dive and not find bottom; and carve, if you will, your sweetheart's name.

Returning to the Fort, we take another look round. On a spur adjacent is a rickety flagstaff, and close beside it a dummy man, holding aloft a hideous bludgeon—*caveat les Anglais!* and a warning to foreigners to properly behave and not kill wild pigs. Under the *ombrage* of this *franc-tireur*, in caverns in the rocks—all rolled in oilskin and packed in zinc—people say the Archives were hid; no scion of Nelson should ever find *them*.

Come along! we may as well push ahead and have a look at the Governor's "Retreat" about two kilomètres farther up the gorge. "Why build a house in such a place?" you say. Don't wonder at the question, but such was the lesson of the



BRIDGE OVER A RIVULET.

[C. L. Wragge, photo

“Fashoda stampede” that, hoax notwithstanding, the Government decided to be on the safe side by building a sanctuary for Regent and Records, lest further international complications should arise. After all, one cannot blame them, considering the comparatively defenceless position of Tahiti should war break out with any nation; still, the humour of the incident that led to the move is irresistible, and is fully appreciated by the French themselves.

Hark! there is the sound of a bugle in the mountain fastnesses. Maybe, at least, we'll see some of the soldiers that for so long have guarded the place. On by the narrow path—more ferns, *feis*, dracenas, and bush—past cliff and crag, and over the tearing rivulet by another little bridge. *Son Excellence* probably got here by a Sedan chair and four strapping natives to carry it, with a man ahead to clear the track through a perfect forest of wild ginger.\*

Soon we arrive at the Fautaua Post Office, a tiny *châlet* perched on the mountain slope. Close to, in a *réfectoire* below, is a squad of soldiers and marines, a jolly crew, eating oranges and making merry in this wild asylum of Nature. Comrades have a little garden—long leisure for the peaceful occupation of growing strawberries and cultivating the rose, as John Bull has not yet come, and no opportunity for bayonet work has presented itself. Those Archives are still safe. A little further—past sludge and quagmire and slippery rocks, with the great mountains on either side—and we shall reach the bungalow.

There it is, with tin roof and wooden walls, looming up 'mid a perfect thicket of yellow tecomá. What invading force without a map could find its way here? The house—some

\* The wild ginger in native is called *raer*. The root is used for colouring yellow the fibre-fringe made from the *bourau*, which fringe is used for decorative purposes and for dresses at *fête* times. An excellent sauce is also made from it.

four rooms in all—cost little short of 40,000 francs, labour and carriage of material being big items. Civilians at Papeete resented the expenditure, and such a tax on the island's limited *Trésor*. But now that the “*Entente Cordiale*” prevails, thanks to the diplomacy of our clever King, the luxury of the “Retreat” with its attendant outlay is deemed unnecessary: it has lately



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

“GUARDIANS OF THE ARCHIVES,” FAUTAUA.

been abandoned, and the Post Office, *réfectoire*, military, and mules will perhaps share the same fate. Hence we find the house empty and going to ruin; and the natives just lately have scribbled their love-names all over the walls with as much persistence as any Britisher. Even French visitors disfigure the *salons*. We'll content ourselves with a photograph as a more suitable souvenir.

\* \* \* \* \*

The deepening shadows warn us to return. We talk but little and think much as we trudge down the track with aching thighs, reaching Papeete as the bugle sounds from the warship, and the sun is sinking behind Eimeo in a halo of glory absolutely impossible for the pen to describe. Frequently in the evening mountains of cumulus cloud, awe-impelling in



[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

THE GOVERNOR'S "RETREAT" IN THE UPPER FAUTAUA GORGE.

majesty, form over Eimeo as the warm vapours from the valleys ascend, and are condensed by the colder strata in the upper air; anon the peak will be capped by a curling smoke-like fleece, calling to mind Vesuvius in eruption. No artist should neglect these wonderful pictures.

Hair cut before dinner? Well, there is a Chinese *coiffeur*, and another who was once the Governor's gardener. No brushing by machinery, and Pears' shaving soap has not yet come.





[Coulon, photo.]

LOVE IN TAHITI.

If you prefer it for novelty's sake, and will risk the "crawlers," a native barber, bedecked with a leaf-wreath, will give you a clip under a hibiscus tree.

After coffee, if not too tired, we'll stroll by the beach, down by Patutoa, on the eastern side of the town, and watch the natives, in their quaint canoes with palm-leaf torches, spearing fish for the morning market. The flare of the light bewilders and attracts them. Some fish, fascinated by the torches, are caught by a three-fathom line, baited with the fresh-water shrimp called *ora*; others are driven by associated canoes into the nets.

The scenery here is charming, especially by moonlight. The pale lunar rays on palms and bananas in tender lights and shadows; the peculiar softness of the sky, so characteristic of the tropics; the singing of the people and their merry laugh; the home "costumes" of the native women; the quaint glow of Chinese lanterns as bicycles go tearing past, and which each rider must by law carry; the spooning couples by yon little bridge; the snow-white night-moths flitting all around—the whole combines to stamp the situation on the memory for life. As for the songs to the gasp of the accordion, Ovid for ever must hide his head. Ask the natives, if you will; translation of the words is well-nigh impossible.

## CHAPTER VII

*Third and Fourth Days.* From Papeete to Papara and Return: A Tahitian Diligence—The Easter Island Settlement—Jottings *en route*—God in Nature—Chinese Settlers—"Three Things a Man should do"—"Fruitless Bachelors [deserve Extinction]"—The Duties of a Woman—Counsel's Opinion—Subjects for the Camera—The Village Postmaster—A Legend of Eimeo—Punaavia—Native Schools—Chile Dollars—An Enterprising Frenchman—Taxation—An Aureola of Glory—Old Forts—Tahiti *v.* Mincing Lane—Vanilla Drying—Paea—A Famous Fishing-ground—"Tethys' Bath"—Arrival at Papara—A Church Feast—Tati the Orator—*Aux bons Gourmets*—Religious Spite—"Not if we know It!"—War News in Tahiti—The Nobleman of the Pacific—*Gloire à la France!*—An Ancient *Marai*—The Tale of the Rock—Human Sacrifice—The Glories of a Coral Reef—Medicine Men—Return to Papeete—*Vale!* Tahiti.

UP by five o'clock, and with handbag and camera, we go to Poroi's, down by the beach by the Quai de l'Uranie. It is not necessary to take a private carriage just for the trip to Papara and back while the boat stays, the diligence will do; and the cost of this trip, including food and accommodation, should not exceed 18 Chile dollars, or £1 10s., each person, at the very utmost. People not knowing have been charged most exorbitant prices.

Monsieur Poroi is the man who holds the contract for the island mails. Every morning *les diligences* leave the town bound for the east and west and south coasts respectively. The drivers are mere boys. They are always on the go, out and in, backwards and forwards, and only get 2 Chile dollars,

or 3s. 4d. a day. They seem well satisfied. As for food, Nature provides. The coaches run to Taravao on the isthmus which joins the main island and the peninsula of Tairapu. Every traveller should carry with him the official chart of Tahiti, which can be secured at the Imprimerie du Gouvernement for a few Chile francs.

A quaint little trap is the Tahitian coach, roofed with an awning, and capable of holding six passengers with ordinary gear. It is drawn by two mules, with tinkling sleigh-bells.

Poroi receives us with bland smiles. He's a capital and corpulent fellow, and not only follows the profession of the stable, but is President of the Tahitian Philharmonic Society, revels in Chopin and worships Handel.

"Mais certainement, messieurs," says he, "les places à la diligence? Elle partira à six heures."

\* \* \* \* \*

We take the coach bound west down the Broom Road, passing the cemetery, where are some magnificent specimens of the upright cypress, *Cupressus longifolia*, past the Gilbert Island village, and near a bonny brae, where some natives from the famous Easter Island have made their home. Oh, that we had time to visit them!

But follow our example and see them, good tourist, should you decide to prolong your stay—just for the interest of the visit. Ask the Easter Islanders to tell you of those marvellous ruins of Rapanui.\* They will answer in hazy terms, "*Ita, ita*: no, no. All we *do* know is that God made Adam and then Eve; so the priests tell us, and they *must* be right. The images were made when the earth was made. Our kings wrote prayers, and carved them on the rocks. *Ita*, no more." As a matter of fact, not a native of Easter Island knows anything trustworthy about the ruins, and if you try to make

\* The native name of Easter Island.

him believe that they ante-date Adam, he says you are becoming a savage, and are bound for hell with a twelve-knot breeze. Such is the power of the missionary over these people. Nothing satisfactory will you learn from natives of those strange inscriptions that have puzzled so many. But we consider it certain that Rapanui once formed part of that submerged continent before referred to ; that a race of architects and scholars flourished down there some 300,000 years ago ; that the writings on the rocks were contemporaneous with the efforts of the learned of that age to express themselves in written language anterior to Sanscrit ; that, beside them, the ruins of Central America are as children, the Sphinx and Pyramids very infants ; and that Tahiti, Rarotonga, and some other islands of the Pacific Ocean, including Tonga-tabu, Ponapé, and the Iadrone Islands, where remarkable ruins are also found (with perhaps New Zealand), are remnants of that ancient land. We have found types of insect and plant life, absolutely identical, not only in Tahiti and Rarotonga, but in other similar islands separated by many leagues of ocean in the South Pacific. *How did they get there ?*

Just this *en passant*. It affords food for reflection.

The diligence merrily jogs along, past Chinese stores and native houses, making merry music.

At various points along the way, exquisite panoramas open out of bays, palm capelets, “jibbers” of rock, and the brown reefs beyond with the white surging breakers gleaming in the early sunlight. The waving cocoas skirt the beach and show up sharp 'gainst the deep blue sky, giving an indescribable charm to the whole subtle picture. The entire vegetation is splendid, as before, in this lavish tract bordering the sea. The same types, too, in the wildest luxuriance, and the scent of plumeria fills the air. Look at it all, let nothing escape you ! Rich in her fruits, the soil yields with the greatest abundance.

Observe the great pieces of tin nailed round the palm trees. These prevent the numerous rats from climbing the trunks and eating the nuts. Iron nails are used, and instead of injuring the tree, this drastic treatment improves it, and makes it all the more prolific. Leaves are tied round some palms, and nuts lashed to the trunks of others. These mean *tabu*, and indicate that no fronds are to be cut for basket-making, and no cocoanuts taken respectively under *peine d'amende*.

Bananas are in myriads. Full twelve varieties thrive in Tahiti. See the great hedges of *acalypha*, or false coffee-bush, lining the way, and paw-paws and mangoes are here without end.

What lots of pandanus!—useful to the people as the palm and *bourau*. There are two kinds; the thornless, or small variety, is used for mat-weaving and the manufacture of hats, the other for thatching and making cigarettes.

The breadfruits yield an endless supply; some have been lopped; that makes them spread and bear better fruit. Whether baked, boiled, or in native fashion roasted on lava stones, the breadfruit is a staple food, and, if somewhat insipid, is most nutritious. Some natives steam it on the hot cobs, placing on top layers of sand and banana leaves to keep the vapours from escaping till cooked.

The crimson hibiscus peeps out from the thicket, the flowers of the *bourau* strew the road; and as in Papeete, so here—the bougainvilleas blaze in a wealth of purple, and the great allamanda, in brightest yellow, is snuggling round the houses on this side and on that. There is maize quivering in the wind. Then those mountains, with their supernal tints, and the wool-pack clouds in shapes so grotesque that one conjures up phantoms of every form! The eternal work of God appeals to the very soul, and one's whole being vibrates in unison.

\* \* \* \* \*

Soon we come to a Chinaman's garden, where nearly every



TYPICAL VEGETATION, TAHITI.

[Coulton, photo.

vegetable known in England is successfully grown, and many more besides. Cabbages can be raised by planting shoots from an original stalk. But the seeds of the European kind appear to deteriorate, owing to the uniform tropical heat, and to maintain good stock it is necessary to import. "Johnny" is irrigating with two old kerosene tins strung to an ugly pole across the shoulder. What a snapshot!

"Chinese everywhere?"

Yes, good friend, and good settlers too. Much as the authorities dislike *les Chinois*, much as the Tintos\* are chaffed by the natives in all good humour, Tung Yen does not care one proverbial whit; and it's hard to say what the people would do without him. His vices are admitted—the evils of opium-smoking, gambling, and what not—all which can be seen back there in Papeete, right at the house of Si Ni Tong. All the vegetable growing is in his hands, and the Chinese stores encircle the island. They deal chiefly in tinned meats, jams, sardines, and the like, and are the principal dealers in bread. Long rolls, twisted rolls, and loaves of many shapes fill the counters, with bars of blue and yellow soap mingling with *pareus*, gaudy shirts, prints, and muslins, while old cases are piled on the floor with coffee pans and tables in odd corners.

Some of the Chinese stores have lately closed down, killed by quite recent co-operative establishments, managed by the Tahitians themselves, who are *at last* alive to the fact that they ought to wake up and not let the Tintos have everything.

Never was a person more accommodating to environment than the cosmopolitan Chinaman. He is shrewd and good-natured, and knows the difference between a ten-cent piece and half a franc. He serves all, and serves them well, and 'tis but just that we give him his due. He will carry round a meal to a European, if within coo-ee of his store, in a neat tin can

\* The Tahitian name for the Chinese.





REA MAKING A HAT.

[F. Homes, photo.]

for fifty cents to a dollar Chile ; save one all the bother of cooking ; and the dishes are fit for a *conoscente* of the Palais Royal. So on, along this lovely Broom Road with its constant varieties of native life. See ! there is a woman weaving a hat, while the husband is away on the taro patch. More devoted lovers, while the one love lasts, could not exist.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

We pass the house of Monsieur Goupil, Avocat-Général to all in trouble. It is a beautiful spot, embowered in palms from all the tropics. Dined with him once, at this very place. He's a capital host.

Over desert he thus declaimed : " Three primary duties pertain to man while here on Earth on the physical plane. *Passez le vin ; merci bien !*" All were attention.

" Enumerate them, please, *père avocat-général.*"

" Well, to begin with, a man must be a *father*. Fruitless bachelors deserve extinction. I would place a stiff poll-tax on every man exceeding twenty who cannot claim either son or daughter. *Secundus*, his business is to till the ground, to turn the soil and make it yield ; just, in a word, to plant trees. Look at me ! I've planted this garden and watched the things grow from infancy to age, and the doing of this duty strengthened the brain for professional work. Thirdly and lastly, he should write a book, the product of mature thought in ripe age, setting forth his knowledge and the fruits of experience in some form or other that will benefit *posterity*, for which all men should have most sacred regard. And if I were to add a fourth," said the learned counsel, as he helped himself to a glass of *vin blanc* and passed the bottle, " I should say, travel. Seeing the world is a grand education ; it ennobles the mind, widens the understanding, and poisons prejudice. It presses home the axiom that, despite all creeds, colour, and caste, the *genus homo* is ONE ; and all should strive for the common good.

Well, sir, I've travelled—I have been to South America, and farther too; once ran away in an open boat—and now that my hair is turning grey, I wouldn't leave Tahiti for the mines on the Rand.”

“And what are the duties of woman?” we ventured to ask.

“To look after the house, sir, and mind the children; to be good wives, good mothers; to leave politics alone and darn the clothes. Tahitian women, *in woman's sphere*, are superior by far, in my opinion, to their sisters in the Bois; and few *Belgraviennes* can give them points.

\* \* \* \* \*

Unique subjects for the artist continue to present themselves.

Note that old dame leading a pig, and those cattle for the butcher in a narrow waggon. Next is a man in elaborate *pareu* working on the road, and sheltered from the sun by just a palm leaf; tufts of coral are bleaching for shipment on the roof of that hut close by the sea.\* Here is one scraping coconuts. Yonder, a native, out on the reef and up to his waist a-spearing fish. Boys and girls are walking on stilts—a favourite pastime.

What a happy-go-lucky place it is! A Tahitian may be rich in Chile dollars, and lose the lot in a spree at a grog shop. It matters not; away to the mountains for a bunch of *feis*, and he starts afresh with new capital.

See the fishermen's nets hanging on the trees; the floats attached are of *bourau* wood. Catamarans are in dozens, hauled on the beach, high and dry. Some have double outriggers, one on each side. When night comes they'll float them again, and

\* A quicker way to clean coral fresh from the reefs is thus. Boil it forty minutes in water containing wood-ashes, well rinse in cold water, and lay in the sun to dry. This should be done as soon as possible after removal from the sea.

go a-fishing with the palm-leaf torch. Canoes, when too old for further service, are filled with earth and turned into seed pans.

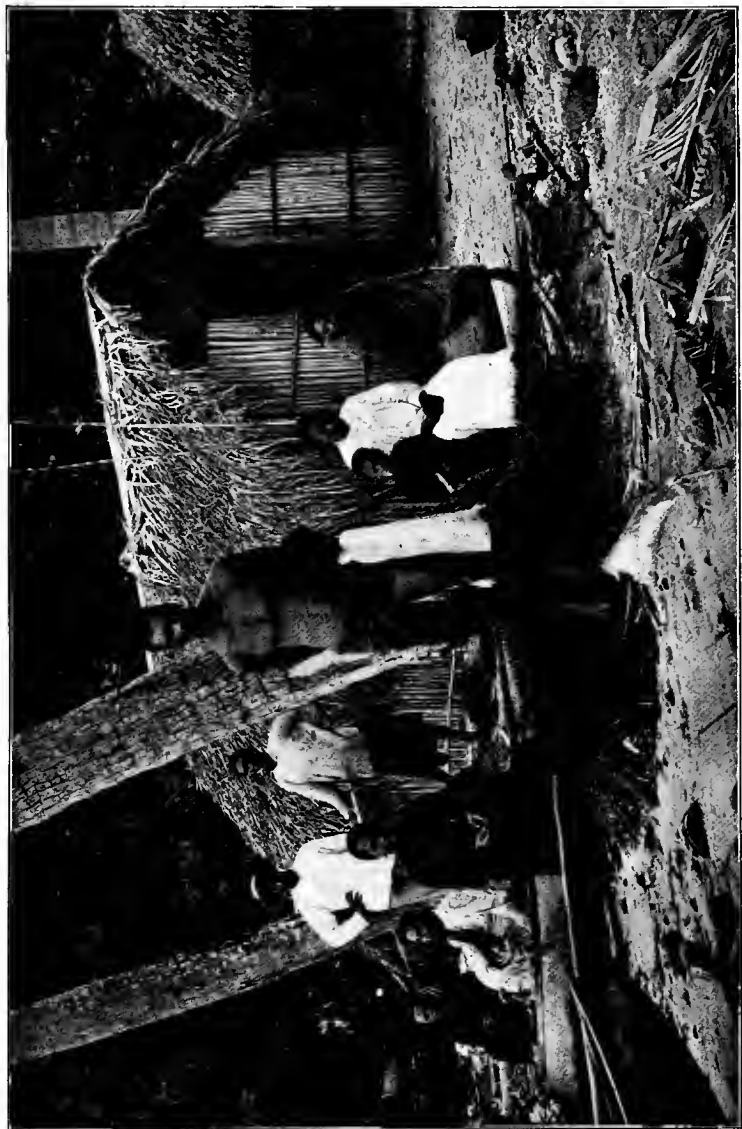
And there are those strange-looking oval baskets of bamboo, which the noble earl who wrote on Tahiti, so facetiously likened to women's "bathing machines." They are called *haapée iá*, and being towed behind the fishing-canoes keep minnows, or *oma*, and other bait alive in captivity till actually wanted. Large ones are used for storing the fish caught in the nets, thus preserving them fresh for the market in a salt-water cage.

Tiny land-crabs, with one red claw, scuttle for their holes as we pass by.

The diligence stops now and again at the various post-offices. A *boite aux lettres* is fixed to the conveyance, securely locked. This can only be opened by the postmaster of every village, who comes up to the coach with a duplicate key and runs through the letters at each stopping-place. Some of the officials are natives, and mighty proud they are of the red badge supplied to them by the Government.

Look at the numerous boxes pinned to the trees all along the way. They may be anything from a kerosene tin to an old case of "Colman's Ball Blue." They serve the purpose of a larder, bread-box, and dairy. The butcher will deposit in them a kilo of meat; the baker a loaf, as he blows his horn of conch shell; and the dairyman a bottle of nice, new milk; and no one steals, or thinks of pilfering his neighbour's goods, for these boxes are held sacred.

Eimeo, or Moorea, is frequently seen to westward, with its grotesque and crinkled pinnacles. Occasionally one may catch a glimpse of the renowned hole in the mountains of this striking island. The legend is that a native at Point Venus in anger threw a whopping spear in days when Europeans were not known, that it pierced the hill and fell into Raiatea. Another



[Coulton, photo.]

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY PLACE.

legend we may mention here, which beats the other one. A burly Tahitian was planting taro near this very road, and vowed that he would finish his patch ere sundown. But the sun went too fast for him, whereupon he made a noose of *bourrau* fibre (presumably ninety-three million of miles in length) and lassoed the scoting orb, keeping him anchored till he had finished his work. It will be generally conceded that this was superior to the performance of Joshua. Simple natives are credulous to a fault.

\* \* \* \* \*

Passing the pretty Church of St. Etienne, we come to the village of Punaavia.

Grazing ponies are tethered to trees, and joyous brown children go skipping to school, and smilingly greet us with a respectful "Bon jour!" They raise the hat with a graceful twist, as elegantly as any in the Bois de Boulogne. In the country, too! We expected to be greeted with the usual "Yarana." Why this? Well, the French are alarmed for the safety of their language; they want it spoken as Russian in Poland, and measures have been taken for compulsory education of the native youth. Not long ago the children went to school or kept away just as they pleased, and parents were indifferent. Now every child, on attaining five years, has to attend school, and remain a pupil till fourteen, or such time as the necessary examination is passed. Every village of any importance has now its school, and lessons are given in Tahitian also. Periodically the inspector goes round, and a big man he is. Adults can read and write in their own vowelled language readily enough, but French to them is the *pons asinorum*. They have difficulty with the idioms and pronunciation. How the new system will work remains to be seen.

But all the efforts of the officials to introduce French coinage as standard circulation among the natives have signally

failed ; even the Chinamen will reject it. The francs are confined to the Government offices. In the laudable efforts to retain French money in the country districts and to familiarize the people with the national coin, the little Treasury in Papeete and the Caisse Agricole have been authorized to issue paper



GROUP OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN—PURE TAHITIANS. [Coulon, photo]

currency. Notwithstanding this, the dollars of Chile and piastres of Peru hold their own. Depreciated in the markets of South America, speculators flooded Tahiti with these illegal coins ; the natives prefer them to any others, and will readily accept two piastres rather than a five-franc piece. It seems impossible to overcome their prejudice.

Observe that French homestead as we drive along, and

learn what Gallic thrift can do. The master of the place is proudly tending his cattle and sheep. By dogged energy and indomitable industry, with perseverance that knows no check, has he acquired independence in fair Tahiti. He planted his palms; 'tis now a grove—an open sesame—yielding coprah that will never fail within the lives of his children's children. A type of his gallant nation, he, at least, is a standing denial to the assertion that the French cannot colonize. There he lives in the fresh air of heaven, and cares as much for the Paris Bourse, with its gnawing worries and restless racket, as that famous institution thinks about him.

“What about taxes?”

Well, direct taxation is no heavy burden, for 6 dollars and 40 cents in French money annually on every man over eighteen and up to sixty should ruin no one, and this money is largely spent in maintaining the roads. Every one, except women, residing in Tahiti for more than twelve months has to pay this amount. It is a righteous impost, and the revenue proper must be maintained. Then there are trade and professional licences. Every storekeeper must have his permit, every doctor his licence; and these may range from 40 francs per annum for a Chinaman trader to 500 francs for a profession. Probably our dentist friend pays the latter sum, and he makes his patients pay the piper, and no mistake! Sharp practice, you know! Wits bring Chile dollars. “Money down when impressions are taken,” one customer told us, “and old gold plates into the bargain.” Dogs are charged 10 francs a year. The water-tax in Papeete is 60 francs. Then there are import and export duties, from 50 francs a ton on exported coprah to 240 francs a ton on exported pearl-shell. Waggon's are taxed, but the land is not; and incomes are free. It is, of course, impossible to please all, and some will tell you that the Government discourages work by this taxation, and puts a premium



on native laziness. It is difficult to see the gist of this argument.

Notice the beautiful valley of the Punaruu river just before passing those two *bâtiments* or forts, which, perched on the lower hills, are such striking objects. Of them, more presently. Look up the gorge! In the distance is a mountain-bluff with steeper hills in sharp outline on either side. This is unique for cloud effects. Under suitable atmospheric conditions the entire top and distant ridge of the mountain in early morning, as the coach passes, may be fringed or belted with a band of cumulus cloud, *apparently* about 6 feet wide. If the sun's bearing is favourable, this cloud-band will be brilliantly illuminated, forming an aureola of glory, the exact contour of the mountain, the splendour of which no language can tell. A Royal Academician, seeing it on canvas and true to Nature, would probably dismiss the picture as the wildest production of an abnormal imagination.

Now, as to the forts. History declares that they were built by the French about 1840, when the Tahitians revolted against Gallic influence, preferring the rule of the English missionaries and the protection of the Union Jack. In the revolution and near this spot the French general, Protet, was killed. A man-o'-war is named after him.

\* \* \* \* \*

We now approach Paea.

The odour of vanilla loads the air. See the brown pods laid out in line by many a house as we pass along. The diligence is stopping for change of horses near the village, so down we'll get directly and examine the process.

Yet just a pause to note the scene. Contrast it with an office in Mincing Lane on a dull and slushy morning in November.

It's washing day. Women are beating the clothes in the

creek, 'mid lilies with flowers like stars of white. Giant palms wave o'erhead, and a tamarind casts a grateful shade. Nerva, shadowed in falling black tresses, is darning a white man's stocking, pulled all taut across a cowry shell. The sweet-eyed girls are lolling at length, stretched on the ground, with heads on hands all poised akimbo. One will be carrying a gourd of water. Babies and infants are cooing and chuckling, and sucking pigs mingling are feeding on cocoanuts, while the sow looks on with eyes asquint and grunts approval. Gaudy *pareus* are placed to dry, covering the sides of yon bungalow-thatch, their tints of blue, yellow, and red blending with the environment like pigment on a masterpiece. The tones of gay shawls, pink dresses, quilts, and other brilliant articles of native attire add final touches to the wealth of colour. Coprah in rows, exuding its oil, is hanging to cure beside the beach, and husks are in heaps for household fuel. The lap of the waves and the frays of the banana leaves render a symphony in a minor key, canoes are ready to be launched at dusk, and coral is strewn white as snow. The tints of the crotons add tone to the picture, mixing with cannas in fullest bloom; and pigeons alight from that pretty dove-cot, built in the arms of a spreading breadfruit, awaiting the morsel from the maiden's hand. Roosters are flush with the tide of life, and a fussy old hen attends the chickens.

*Quelle scène sublime.* Pity the poor clerk, perched high on a stool.

The accordion stops, the sewing-machine ceases its constant whizz, and up gets Popoti, with a wistful glance, to fetch young cocoanuts for the *popaa paratane*.\* Her name in English means "the cockroach." "*Maitai, ma oorū*"—" 'tis good, we thank you"—and if we kiss her, so much the better, our Platonic salute (don't smirk, readers) will be esteemed an

\* A general name for Europeans, especially Britishers.

honour. Kissing the cockroach! We shan't forget it. We go to the house so clean and sweet. Old Tane, the host, commands us to enter, and will take no refusal. Two double beds for the married couples are in every room—chips from Eden before the fall! And those pretty coverlets are there,



COPRAH HANGING TO DRY.

[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

wrought in patchwork and known as *tifaifai* in the native tongue. One can be bought for 10 piastres, or 16s. 8d.; and cheap enough, too, for the sake of the souvenir. An American clock adorns the shelf and a 'Frisco paper lies on the floor. Not only on the verandahs, but also in the room is the vanilla drying, placed on mats.

Now for the mode of preparing vanilla for the markets of the world. The pods are plucked when golden yellow, and are

taken to the house and laid in a pile. In three or four days they become black. Thence they are removed, and placed on frames to dry in the sun, but are brought within doors every night, and also if it rains. This process occupies two months, and when it is completed the pods are spread within the house or on the verandahs exposed to the heat, but not to sunlight—just as we see them laid out before us. When thoroughly cured, and the drying complete, they are tied in bundles of equal length, and lashed by *bourau* bark. Each batch contains about fifty beans. Then they are ready for shipment, and the extraction of that essence which forms one of the most delightful aromatics known to *connoisseurs*.

Time was when vanilla growing was the main industry, but lately the price has fallen in the commercial world, with respect to Tahiti, from 18 Chile dollars to 1 dollar 40 cents per kilo; and although the industry is still kept up, yet coprah is now the only article that really pays.

Tane presents us with cigarettes, made of strong native tobacco and rolled in pandanus leaves. Thus away.

We pass an old restaurant with a signboard that tells of times that were—"Ici rendezvous des Joyeux, Repas sur commande." Now 'tis no more. The Government has lately closed all wine shops, except in Papeete.

The village of Paea is left behind, and on goes the diligence, by cliff and buff, lagoon and sea.

Between the beach and the main reef is a famous fishing-ground. On bright mornings a whole fleet of catamarans, ten to twenty, may be seen drawing up a cordon round the sunken nets. A prettier sight is rare. The gritty brown men, like Samsons and Cyclops, profiled in outline against the blue water, are swinging huge stones tied tightly with rope, and banging the sea for all they are worth. Just the same principle as beaters at home on the morning of pheasant-day. An old

minor chanty accompanies each thump, and gradually the cordon grows tighter and tighter as the fish fill the meshes and supply Papeete.

Many a river is passed *en route*, and we pause for a peep at the cave of Maraa. A pool, pellucid in sullen shade, lies deep



DRYING VANILLA.

[Coulon photo.]

beneath the vaulting rocks, o'erhung by vines and fringed by ferns; swallows fly from the hidden nooks, and drops of water, clear as crystal, come spattering down 'mid gullets, rills, and moss-grown banks—a perfect piece of lavish Nature. Could Tethys have a fairer bath, or Venus a grotto of greater beauty? The temperature of the water is about 69.

Many a little native house has its bee-farm close handy. They get the nests of wild bees from the hills, and hive them in old gin cases, or anything suitable. The honey yielded is poor

in class, and is often stored in demi-johns placed 'on the verandahs.

\* \* \* \* \*

So to Papara, and here we are at the south-western extremity of Tahiti. No hotels are round the island, only what may be termed "guest-houses." Accommodation here can be got at a beautiful bungalow down by the beach, belonging to Tati, our friend at Papeete. He is Chief of the district, and deservedly beloved by all his people. Then there is Lehertal's restaurant, even more handy; and if one desires to prolong the stay, a villa can be rented at a reasonable price.

A charming village is Papara. The pretty little church belonging to the Catholics recalls Piedmont, but here the palms vibrate to "Kyrie Eleison," the breadfruit re-tingles to Ave Maria.

We alight from the diligence near another church, gleaming in whitewash and roofed in blood red, aptly symbolical of Elysium and Hades. This is the property of the Lutheran or Protestant *culte*, and has just been finished. Why the expense, it is hard to divine. The Cathedral of Nature is all around, with God in everything and carols in the flowers.

Strange paradox, marvellous sophism; that the natives, bubbling with life and the essence of the Infinite, should be taught the dissensions of the Gospel of Love! Surely a prayer can arise from a palm thatch and hymns ascend to the vault of heaven!

The Protestant church, fresh from the lime-brush, has already a history, stamped on the lining of the native stomach, writ large on the cells of the Tahitian brain.

So has that *himine*-house, closely adjacent, supported by *bourau* posts and roofed with pandanus. Beside it is a cauldron, ugly and black, once used for boiling whale blubber and large enough to hold a dissected elephant; while nearer

the beach lies a gigantic *haapée*,\* near 40 feet long by 15 broad, and full 5 feet high, big enough for Lavina and her girls to romp in.

Let us chronicle the connection.

When the church was opened on “4 Atete,† 1904,” it was deemed fit to celebrate the occasion by a big feast—one which



[C. L. Wragge, photo

GLEAMING IN WHITEWASH, ROOFED BLOOD-RED.

should outshine any previously recorded in the annals of Tahiti. Near three thousand people assembled in that huge thatched shed, which was built for the occasion, drawn from all parts of the “Vowel Island.” Each district sent its own

\* The great bamboo basket, remember, for preserving alive fish caught in the nets—the “women’s bathing machine” of “The Earl and the Doctor.”

† August.

*himine*, or choir, with voices strung from the minor keys of deep diapason to the wildest notes of a muzzled treble. Tati presided, and, with hand uplifted and soul attuned, blessed the multitude, impressing upon them the importance of the event, and begging them to do honour to the unique situation. He feelingly spoke in old Tahitian—a dialect different to that of the present day. After referring to family matters connected with his aunt, good Queen Pomare, of beloved memory, he continued his speech in the tenor following, translated into English as far as one can manage it:—

“Fellow-chiefs and good people, my friends and vassals! We have met together to celebrate in this place an event beside which the building of the Pyramids and the statues of Rapanui sink into nothingness as the ant to the man, and are as sand compared with the Aorai. The light of the glorious gospel has fallen upon Papara; its fame shall resound throughout the world. Nations shall emulate the achievements of Tahiti; Papara is immortal even as the universe! And now, Brother Vernier, offer a prayer; and thank the Lord for all His mercies.”

The Lutheran pastor, thus addressed, said a grace,\* and the assembly fell to. They needed no stimulus. Viria of Punaavia smelt the pork; old Aitua of Paea had an eye to the beef. The people were dressed in their brightest and best, and the Bastille *fête* paled by the contrast. Two bulls had been cooked in that gruesome boiler. The odour of flesh-pots tickled the nose.

The feasting continued for three whole days—and actual festivities were kept up for a week—with just that intermission at 2 a.m., and at other times, to aid digestion and rest the paunch. Among the poultry, terror reigned. Fowls had been

\* Tahitians are very particular in this matter, and will not eat without offering thanks.



contributed from all parts of the island. They were eaten by the hundreds, and more sent for. The din in the crates and the screaming of pigs can well be imagined—revel on the one side, massacre on the other. The ancient dance was not allowed; 'twas all too profane at that Christian banquet. Laughter went mingling with the gaggles of death, as necks



THE FEASTING SHED, PAPARA.

[C. L. Wragge, photo.]

were rung, throats cut, and spirits of life returned to the Source.

The soul of Buddha wandered around; tears fell fast from its misty eyes. Spencer looked on from the Astral Plane, and Homer composed an ethereal “Iliad.” “In the name of Christ!” exclaimed the trio; “In the name of Christ!” re-echoed through the System from the mountains of Mercury to the satellite of Neptune.

Altogether, some 1500 fowls and ducks, all told, were sacrificed for this gospel picnic, and 250 boars and sows, not counting sucking-pigs never scheduled; while fish by thousands, of all sizes, shapes, and colours, were jammed in that *haapée*. Shrimps, prawns, and sea centipedes were merely *hors d'œuvres*. No tally exists of the rum consumed, and cases of apoplexy were not recorded.

No one denied that the feast was well organized, and loud were the praises of good old Tati. Yet he has enemies. What man has not? Every one has foes who refuse the part of second fiddle. Some kept away for pure spite, downright malice fostered by dogma.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even in Tahiti cliques and circles, factions and jealousies are rampant in the upper "two hundred," fanned by the squabbles of religious *cultes*, and largely among those of European origin. Where bitterness exists in the native mind, opposing missionaries in former times were distinctly at fault. They lit the match and blew the flame. Some successors feed the fire, and the flock will follow the leading sheep.

The native of Tahiti, in his worship of Nature and unsullied by canon, is a noble man. To him God *is*, Christ was *Love*—that is sufficient. His brain gets bewildered 'twixt Catholic and Protestant, and all the miserable subdivisions of the latter faith. As well ask an infant to solve the calculus, or a child to define the fourth dimension of space, as the pure Tahitian the points in dispute 'twixt Monsignor and Adventist, Lutheran and Mormon. Some of their squabbles have been most disgraceful, and have actually led to open rows in Papeete itself. Why *should* such jealousies be in the name of religion? The various sects are but following tracks according to their lights, which lead to the same goal, just as the railways converge towards London. Each should love and respect the

other, agreeing to differ as to route, and hoping to meet at the “*Grand Terminus*.”

What consummate rubbish is sectarian wrangling viewed in the light of noble Science, in the light of a mind imbued with a sense of the Majesty of the Universe! Think of it—reflect!

Take even a leaf. What is it? Just a laboratory of cells, each one of which contains multitudes of molecules which are formed of atoms inconceivably minute and counted by the billion. These atoms in turn are composed of electrons whirling in symmetry; and *force* and *motion* are everywhere, and nothing is solid in Nature. Then, like a flash, review if you can *all* wonders of Earth, with God in the fly, bird, beast, and man—God in everything that is, has been, and ever will be, with “Sermons in stones,” in flowers, and the crested wave. Hypnotize the body and free the Soul, and away it goes, with infinite speed, surveying the sun, the hydrogen flames, the great coronæ—thence through the ether from planet to planet, calling on Vesta and steamy Saturn; on and away till Neptune is left and the whole Solar System becomes but a speck; onward, onward, on through the depths of the Milky Way, swamping the trillions multiplied by trillions, past the nebulæ clashing in impact, viewing the suns in infinite variety—red suns, green, blue, violet, orange; away past Sirius and great Canopus; by simple systems and compound systems, with planets galore and beings superb, suited to conditions in which they live, farther yet and *never* ending—*ad infinitum! ad infinitum!* with the music of the Cosmos pervading all in tune and harmony throughout the spheres and the anthem swelling for ever and ever, “Benedicite! Benedicite! Thou Infinite Dynamo who art in all, whose Laws are Life,” while a Great Voice rings, surging in volume, “Cleave the rock and there am I; go to Achernar\* and there shalt thou find ME”—*and*—what becomes

\* A first-class sun in the constellation Eridanus.

of puny sects on planet Earth which sunk in a "sun-spot" would lie as a pebble in the crater of Vesuvius?

Now, the native follows the cleric that impresses him most. Taint him with the feud of a given *culte*, and not even mercury will cleanse him of prejudice. He continues to enjoy the pleasures of life; but his creed is his creed, and he reconciles them somehow. Dogma has to suit his personal convenience. Note the effect; we'll give instances. The Protestant parson reads a homily on the Fourth Commandment.

"Quite so," says the native; "six days shalt thou labour, but it ought to have been four."

"And never work on the seventh—not on Sunday," emphasizes the teacher.

"Not if we know it!" declare the proselytes, "unless—yes, *unless we get double pay.*"

"Tauraa," says the minister, "you have broken the Seventh Commandment; my predecessors would have fined you fifty dollars."

"Oh no," replies the young chief, "the Seventh Commandment was never made for *me*—never for Tahitians. Our fathers did it, great-grandfathers too, right away back to the time of Oro. I'm a good Christian, and sing hymns with the rest. There's some mistake; the Seventh Commandment was for the Jew"—and so with the others.

The old missionaries had uphill work, and yet they found responsive soil. They did the best, we can only hope, according to their lights; and all honour to them for stopping human sacrifice in the distant past—that we most fully concede. But those lights were scanty, and they forgot the law of latitude that rules the people. They narrowed down the minds of their disciples to "little Bethels," and evolved bias and religious strife; so much so, as to give one the impression that the people have been dulled by some warping influence

while yet they rebel against tenets antagonistic to the promptings of Nature.

So it is that the natives of Tahiti seem blind to the beauties of their own island, and incapable of realizing its amazing resources and their own possibilities.

The schools of the sects, by narrow teaching, foster this; and breed prejudice in pliant minds which are naturally susceptible to broad influences; so much so, that Catholic children despise Protestants, and *vice versâ*—all in the name of Christ who taught that “All are Mine.”

The French Government schools, which are unsectarian and pursue an enlightened curriculum worthy of a great nation, have all their work to contend against religious *délabrement* of the brain.

Happy the time when “Betelas” are lecture-halls and the Infinite worshipped through all His works! Blessed the day when a “Tati” shall arise to open a university free to all; when the physicist begins with his *x, y, z*; the astronomer unfolds the marvels of the Cosmos!

Remember the people are Maori-Malay, a noble race,



[Coulon, photo.]

A PURE CASTE.

capable of immense advancement when once they are taught to deny limitations and to recognize their Oneness with the Eternal Spirit.

\* \* \* \* \*

If remaining, you will hear many a tale, travelling with a quickness beating the telephone.

Some of the yarns are masterpieces of fiction.

Is the *Taviuni* in? Then look out for something startling! A group will be gathered round a Chinaman's store.

"What's up?" you exclaim. "Eha ta pea pea?"

"War be finish—big one fight—three Japs left—all else kill 'em."

Such is war news in Tahiti.

As for gossip, take advice and shut the ears, especially if it relates to private life. If a man kisses a girl at Taravao, or sixty kilometres by road from town, his wife will know it forthwith at Papeete. Talk about Stead and Atlantic telepathy—it's nothing to it!

Never repeat anything questionable, or ructions may ensue and you'll see not the end. Take chance acquaintances just as you find them; treat all as brethren till you prove unworthiness; avoid "side" as you would the "devil;" never show a native you think him beneath you, and always recollect—*the true Tahitian is Nature's gentleman; in very fact, he is the nobleman of the Pacific.*

If staying in the country, make friends with the *gendarmes*, and leave your card immediately. If asked your business, be straight as a die—no prevarication. Each is a little god in his own village, and can make life pleasant or just the reverse if he catches you tripping in the mesh of French law. Usually they are capital fellows, can be warm friends, and resent being ignored. But don't be seen taking too many notes or photographs of old forts or *bâtiments*, or they will begin to suspect



[Coulon, photo.]

A PURE-CASTE TAHITIAN—NATURE'S GENTLEMAN.

you are a spy in disguise—even if collecting hermit crabs—and a fit subject for a *procès-verbal*.

With the exception of the *gendarmes*—and they are far and few between—one rarely meets a French officer in the country, and the Gallic rule presses but lightly. The majority of the people respect the laws, knowing full well that they are just and reasonable; and thus there is but little trouble.

One can travel for miles and never see a Frenchman. The natives are contented, and it is generally recognized that France in possession is a pronounced success throughout the island. Let justice be done, and *gloire à la France!*

Now just this. If, at the last, you decide to prolong your visit, or if haply you come to Tahiti again, respect French susceptibilities.

Every nation has its peculiarities, and English and Americans do many a thing that the Frenchman would deem the height of absurdity. Be a good all round cosmopolitan, a real good traveller, accepting the tenet of the brotherhood of all men. One young fellow we could mention exclaimed, in the hearing of a moustached *gendarme*—just for a joke, you know,—“Why such a fuss about Fashoda? why England, if she chose, could run a clove hitch right round Tahiti and tow the whole island to British Columbia!” For this he was arrested and brought before the court; but a merciful judge let him off with a reprimand, considering his youth: “Que vous êtes fou! Jamais encore! La prochaine fois c’est la prison!”

\* \* \* \* \*

Following a track leading towards the mountains in the Faareria Valley for about a mile, and crossing the stream, we come to the *marai* of Tati’s ancient family.

One knows it by the walls of lava stones going to ruin by the ravages of time. It is overgrown by a tangle of ferns, vanilla vine, *passiflora* and *bourrau*.



What a history those stones have seen! Ask not Tati of the dim distant past; he might be reticent, and square away with a leading wind. Remember that he belongs to the Christian fold, and is an earnest supporter of the Protestant faith. The *régime* of the *marais* ended with Cook—paganism then received its death-blow.

Let's take that bit of stream-hole lava, press it to the head, and, with the eye of clairvoyance, unravel the skein. Events were recorded in the spirit of the rocks even as by the photographic plate. It voices like the sound box of Edison's gramophone. List to the record:—

“When after that continent had sunk 'neath the ocean, by cracks down deep in the cooling earth, vents were formed. This island up-topped, Raiatea, Eimeo, and others too, remnants of a land where dwelt that race whose architects chiseled the eikons of Rapanui, ages before the time of Adam. Migrations took place from what now is Asia, when, by precession, equilibrium was restored. Tahitian ancestry comes from Malaysia, following the wake of ‘Columbus’ of the period. When the first immigrants landed, the leader addressed the ground, and said ‘TAHITI! I call thee TAHITI!’ which means in your English, ‘Transplanted from the East,’ implying Asia. They worshipped Nature, and recognized a force which they thought beyond it. That they call Taaroa, the Great First Cause. Instinct told them of a feminine counterpart—that they called Hina, Goddess of the soil. Sons came by inductive reasoning; and Oro, the eldest, became lord of the World; Tane, his brother, was master of Shade-land. As immigrants settled they chose their camps. The chiefs laid down their stones or marks, which answered to fixing the points of the compass. ‘This shall be mine,’ said one, ‘here will I live, increase and multiply.’ ‘And this mine,’ said another, and others as they walked the land. ‘Here will I

build my *marai*, or temple, sacred to Oro, to whom I will sacrifice the best I possess.' I—the rock you hold in your hand—was brought with the rest from the mountain slopes to form the walls of this ruined shrine. I witnessed events which Tati knows not, which existing families would feign ignore. Women were excluded from the sacred rites, and generally regarded as of no account. By yon ruined heap once stood the altar. There the High Priest, ere the white man came, offered to Oro fruits and beasts; and the lusty youth, a sacrifice in blood, for the sake of a blessing. I saw the tomahawk that smashed the skull. Where now is that breadfruit, was the charnel-house of the *marai*. There the remains, left after the oblations, exuded to the air.\* The priests were recorders of the ancient legends and all family and tribal lore. Close by yon wall, near four feet high, was what you call the 'family pew,' sacred to the master of this ancient temple. From him descended on the mother's side, by pedigree branching as the limbs of a *bourau* tree, the Tati family; of lineage noble as your Alfred the Great. 'Tahiti being peopled, seven migrations went to New Zealand, working their way by a chart of 'knots,' and trusting their knowledge as given by the Gods. Ask no more—times have altered, the new dispensation has begun."

Rubbing the eyes, one looks around.

Scorpions hide by that moss-clad stone, and land-shells are found under the *débris*.

We hasten back through a thick tecoma grove, and reach the village.

Had time permitted we could have visited a *marai* of a different type, a little beyond Papara and close to the beach. In shape it resembles a square tower. Every native who passed that way had to furnish a stone to complete its erection. In

\* There appears to be no proof that the Tahitians were ever actually cannibals.



[Couton, photo.]

A TYPICAL MARAI.

ancient days, when feuds prevailed between the clans, the heads of chiefs killed in battle were offered to the gods on the high altar; and bodies were consigned to the lumber of the charnel-house. Women caused all the wars, and got men into trouble then as now. Beauty was regarded as a profession, and pretty girls were paraded by fond fathers before chiefs of other districts. After much wrangling, the district of Papara won the headship; and this *marai* became specially famous. What remains of it, "Mahaiatea," as it is called, is now used as a lime-kiln for the burning of coral.

Further on still is Atimaono, the old cotton plantation. It has a romance of its own as startling as any in the history of the Pacific. Some day you may hear about it—no more just now.

Music beguiles the rest of the evening, and so to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Awake by five, and off to the reef in a catamaran.

You'll write to your people? No words can portray the glories of the sea. Can you convey to friends, far away, any adequate idea of those clumps of coral, red, pink, white, ochre and umber, in water basins tinged with all the tints of the spectrum?

Then there are those broad bands of light and shade on the ocean, beyond the great curling breakers,—'tis perfectly lovely!

And how describe the many fish? Some we saw dying on the slabs of the market: here they are living, some in caverns and troughs, mid asterias, sea-weed, echini, and shells, the beauty of which no tongue can tell. But to see them properly go out with a fisherman. Ask of the native his night's catch. Beyond in the deeps are blue fish, red, yellow, speckled, spotted; great fish, little fish; lobsters and crabs with goggling eyes and in infinite variety. The colours of the fish form a protection against their tribal enemies. If inhabiting deep

water the shade will be blue; while fish frequenting the shallows will be tinged with green; and those negotiating varying depths have various colours: so wonderful is the economy and harmony of Nature!

Now what sane man, as he contemplates the sun “blazing



OFF TO THE REEF IN A CATAMARAN.

[Coulton, photo.]

with radium” \* and the tropic minnow with cobalt blue, dare ignore the Power Supreme?

Then there are fish with horns, some with snouts, others with battering rams, and mouths, when opened, two feet wide; stinging fish, octopus, devil-fish. Oh, give it up; one cannot describe them!

\* The reasoning is that as uranium and radium derivable therefrom are on Earth, they must also exist in the sun, from which this planet was thrown off, and probably also in other suns and nebulae. Moreover, as helium exists in the sun in large quantities, some solar physicists interpret this also as showing the presence of radium, and we are entirely in accord with them. Startling discoveries are expected in physics and psychics.

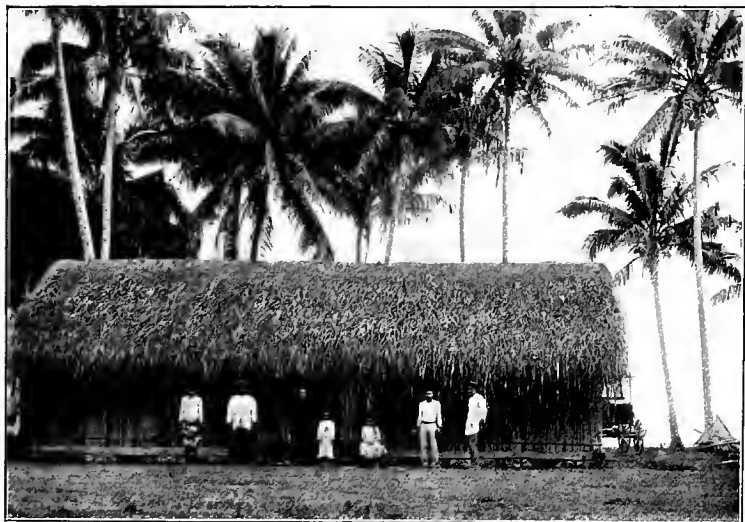
But just a few words more. Look out if you want to wade in the shallows. There are several kinds of poisonous fish, and among them may be mentioned the *noho* and *teromeha*. One of the worst is a rusty brown creature about one foot long, looking exactly like a rock in the water. As one approaches up goes erect a poisonous fin with five ugly spines. It never attacks unless trodden upon. Then look out! If feet are bare or boots not strong, a vicious acid squirts 'neath the skin. Immediately one drops as if in a fit, nervous pains shoot through the body, glands swell, feet get black, and lockjaw and death may supervene if a native doctor is not at hand. A secret nostrum, supposed to be a decoction of the *mape*, or native chestnut, is applied to the head or nape of the neck. The effect is instantaneous, and a cure is effected. The natives are reticent with respect to this remedy, lest the power of healing should leave them. Sea-bathing is thus a risky matter, let alone the echini on which one may tread; and deep swimming is not to be thought of. Great fellows are the native medicine-men. They can cure when "Monsieur le Pharmacien, à l'Hôpital Militaire," is powerless as a child.

Suppose one falls from a cocoanut tree, and sustains injuries. They run for a canoe and fill it with water, mixing therewith certain herbs, called in native, *niu*, *patoa*, *haehaa*, and *mou*, with a few drops of sandal-wood oil termed *ahi*. These are all pounded and mixed up, and then put in the canoe in the form of a ball. The effect is to chill the water. In this the sufferer is immersed, lying at length with just the head out for the sake of breathing. He remains in the water till shivering sets in and the teeth chatter. Relief is quickly afforded, and the operation is repeated twice a day for about a week, when the cure is complete. Peûe and Tiurai are the best native doctors; all Tahiti knows their renown. Why, Tiurai healed a man insane by putting red-hot lava stones

against his forehead—“possessed of the devil,” he said; and Satan fled.

'Tis now past nine, and the diligence will soon be returning from Papara to Papeete. The natives assemble to wish us “Farewell”—and one last shot with the camera.

Time quickly flies, and 'mid the glorious scenery on the return trip we digest our experience.



FAREWELL, PAPARA.

[Coulon, photo.]

The steamer is whistling. Adieu! Should you return to Tahiti again, stay between boats and go round the island. Attend native churches to hear the weird singing. Make a detour, by river and forest, tangle and cliff, to Lake Vaihiria. See Chief Ori down there at Tautira; give him a nip and he'll see you through. Stay at Hittiaa with Madame Teputua. Go to Moorea. We've done it all, and would do it again. Of these we may tell you further in “Sennit,” which, it is

hoped, will be published within reasonable time. Much we could have added to these notes too; but the limit is reached, and close we must. Once more, "Good-bye," pleasant voyage. Tell all your friends from one who *knows*, "See Tahiti ere you die." Its future is assured with the Panama Canal. *Wherever else you think of travelling, above all, GO TO TAHITI.* Yarana!

And now for a final note.—I have faithfully striven to show Tahitian life as it is. The world is "large," and latitude is a powerful factor; let that suffice. I salute my critics—may God bless them!—and "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"



[P. Jones, photo.]

"GOOD-BYE."



## APPENDIX

CATALOGUE \* of some Natural History specimens collected by the Author, with the aid of natives, in the Society Islands, mainly in Tahiti. Authors of specific names only are given.

### SHELLS

The distribution includes the Paumotus. For convenience, the Mollusca are divided into Bivalves and Univalves, and the families are arranged in alphabetical order respectively. It must be understood that the list only includes specimens in the Author's collection, and that to catalogue the Mollusca of the entire region would be a colossal undertaking.

#### BIVALVES

##### Fam. ARCIDÆ

*Arca decussata*, Sowerby . Very common on the inner reefs around Tahiti. Sometimes called *barbata*.

##### Fam. AVICULIDÆ

*Meleagrina margaritifera*,  
*Linnaeus* The grand pearl shells, including the variety known as the "Tahiti Black Lip." The value of these shells ranges from £7 to £11 per cwt., according to market, which fluctuates. The valves can be used as dessert-plates.

*Meleagrina maxima*, *Jameson*

*Mellina costellata*, *Conrad*

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## Fam. CARDIIDÆ

*Hemicardium fragum*, *Linnæus* (Surrounding seas.)

## Fam. CHAMIDÆ

*Chama* (species) . . . . Found fixed to corals and rocks.

## Fam. MYTILIDÆ

*Modiola metcalfei*, *Hanley* The "mussel" family.  
*Lithodomus* (species)

## Fam. PECTINIDÆ

*Pinna euglypta*, *Hanley* . The beautiful "fan mussel."

## Fam. PSAMMOBIIDÆ

*Asaphis deflorata*, *Linnæus* Common. An article of food much used by the natives. The beautiful valves can be mounted, and used as unique little salt-cellars.

## Fam. TELLINIDÆ

*Tellina scobinata*, *Linnæus* To be found in sand under shallow water.  
,, *robusta*, *Hanley*  
,, *rugosa*, *Born*

## Fam. TRIDACNIDÆ

*Tridacna crocea* (probably), *Lamarck* Small samples of these mammoth shells are very common on the Tahitian beach, especially near Punaavia. The large species of this family, *T. gigas*, provides the shell *bénitiers*, so often seen in cathedrals.

## Fam. VENERIDÆ

*Caryatis obliquata*, *Hanley* Most of this family bury themselves in sand  
*Circe pectinata*, *Linnæus* close in shore.  
*Venus puerpera*, ,,

## UNIVALVES

## Fam. ACMÆIDÆ

*Acmaea costata*, *Sowerby* . False limpets. The interior of this shell is delicately tinted. Use a sharp knife and great care in detaching them from the coral "rocks."

## Fam. ACTEONIDÆ

*Solidula solidula*, also called (Surrounding seas.)  
*Buccinulus solidulus*, *Linnæus*

## Fam. AURICULIDÆ

- Melampus caffer*, *Küster* . All these small shells are found at highest  
 ,, *fuscus*, *Philippi* water-mark under *débris* of vegetation  
 ,, *fasciatus*, *Desh.* and broken coral. *Fasciatus* is beauti-  
 ,, *luteus*, *Quoy* fully striped, and *caffer* has a unique  
 black cap.

## Fam. BUCCINIDÆ

- Tritonidea proteus*, *Reeve* . The whelk family.  
 ,, *rubiginosa*, ,,  
*Tritonidea undosa*, *Linnæus*

## Fam. BULIMULIDÆ

- Partula arguta*, *Pease* . . Found chiefly on leaves of vanilla vines.  
 ,, *dentifera*, *Pfeiffer* . Generally found in Raiatea on vegetation  
 ,, *faba*, *Martyn* well inland. These three varieties are  
 ,, *hebe*, *Pfeiffer* used by natives in making shell-wreaths  
 and necklaces.  
 ,, *hyalina*, *Broderip* . Habitat vanilla vines, and fronds of taro,  
 ,, *otaheitanæ*, *Fei* *feis*, ferns, etc.  
 ,, *rufa*, *Lesson*

## Fam. BULLIDÆ

- Bulla ampulla*, *Linnæus* . One of the "bubble-shells."

## Fam. CAPULIDÆ

- Amalthea acuta*, *Quoy* and *Gaimard* Parasites found clinging to *turbo* shells.

## Fam. CASSIDIDÆ

- Cassis cornuta*, *Linnæus* . The "helmet shells." *Cornuta* is very  
 ,, *rufa* ,, large and handsome, and *rufa* is another  
 ,, *vibex* ,, grand species; *vibex* is small, but very  
 pretty. To obtain these, unless at the  
 stores, one must visit the outer reefs.

## Fam. CERITHIIDÆ

- Cerithium columna*, *Sowerby*  
 ,, *lineatum*, *Bruquière*  
 ,, *obeliscus* ,,  
 ,, *piperitum*, *Sowerby* Used by natives for necklaces.

## Fam. COLUMBELLIDÆ

- Columbella discors*, *Gmelin*  
*Pyrene obtusa*, *Sowerby*

## Fam. CONIDÆ

- Conus bandanus*, *Hwass* . The cone family is particularly interesting, and the reefs form a grand hunting-ground. Some species, especially *bandanus* and *millepunctatus*, form unique drawing-room ornaments, and for such should be well cleaned and carefully treated with spirits of salts.
- „ *hebræus*, *Linnæus*
- „ *imperialis*, „
- „ *lividus*, *Bruguière*
- „ *minimus*, *Linnæus*
- „ *pulicarius*, *Bruguière*
- „ *tiaratus*, *Broderip*
- (Cylinder) *aulicus*, *Linnæus*
- „ *canonicus*, *Brug.* . *Canonicus* and *textile* are considered by some to be identical.
- „ *pennaceus*, *Born*
- „ *textile*, *Linnæus*
- (Dendroconus) *eburneus*,  
*Bruguière*
- (Dendroconus) *millepunctatus*, *Linnæus*
- (Leptoconus) *striatus*, *Linn.*
- (Nubecula) *tulipa*, „
- (Rhizoconus) *rattus*, *Hwass* } These two are closely allied. Some con-  
„ *tabitensis*, *Brug.* } chologists consider them one species.
- „ *vitulinus*, *Hwass*
- Conus* rules this family.

## Fam. CORALLIOPHILIDÆ

*Coralliophila neritoidea*, *Gmelin*

## Fam. CYPRÆIDÆ

- Cypræa arabica*, *Linnæus* . The "cowries" are a favourite family with collectors. Tahitian waters form a rich field. Many of the species are very beautiful.
- „ *asellus*, „
- „ *caput-serpentis*, *Linn.*
- „ *carneola*, *Linnæus* . The pink lips are much admired.
- „ *erosa*, „
- „ *isabella*, „
- „ *lynx*, „
- „ *moneta*, „ . The small yellow cowry which in some parts of the tropics still passes current as coin.
- „ *annulus*, „ . The crown of this shell is delicate purple with a whitish ring around. Great colonies of them are found in shallow water at Faa, a few kilometres south from Papeete.
- „ *nucleus*, „
- „ *obvallata*, *Lamarck* . A diminutive variety of *moneta-annulus*, having the crown depressed below the outer rim. Very plentiful at Tahiti.

- Cypræa poraria*, *Linnæus* . Small, but very pretty.  
 ,, *reticulata*, *Martyn* A beautiful species with net-like markings.  
 ,, *scurra*, *Chemnitz*  
 ,, *talpa*, *Linnæus*  
 ,, *tigris*, ,, . A special and well-known favourite on  
 account of the rich spots. Very orna-  
 mental.  
 ,, *ventriculus*, *Lam.*  
 ,, *ziczac*, *Linnæus* . } Diminutive, but pretty species.  
*Epona cicercula*, ,, }

## Fam. DOLIIDÆ

- Dolium perdid*, *Linnæus* . Generally known as "Tun-shells." *Perdid*  
 is very handsome.

## Fam. FASCIOLARIIDÆ

- Latirus sanguifluus*, *Reeve*  
*Peristernia nassatulus*, *Lam.*

## Fam. HALIOTIDÆ

- Haliotis pulcherrima*, *Mar.* A small species of the well-known "ear-  
 shell."

## Fam. HARPIDÆ

- Harpa conoidalis*, *Lamarck* Handsome species of the popular "harp-  
 ,, *ventricosa*, ,, shells."

## Fam. HELICINIDÆ

- Helicina brazieri*, *Pease* . A small but very pretty yellow species  
 found inland at Raiatea, and much used  
 by the natives in making shell-wreaths.

## Fam. JANTHINIDÆ

- Ianthina* (species) . . . "Violet sea-snails," very delicate purple.

## Fam. LIMACIDÆ

- Trochomorpha trochiformis*, Small land-shells, found on vanilla vines.  
*Ferussac*  
*Trochonanina conulus*, *Pease*

## Fam. LITTORINIDÆ

- Littorina alboricola*, *Reeve*  
 ,, *newcombi*, ,, . A prettily spotted periwinkle.  
 ,, *obesa*, *Sowerby*

## Fam. LOTOBIIDÆ

- Collubrellina affinis, *Brod.* . A quaint family known as "Trumpet-shells."  
 Distortrix constricta, "  
 Gutturium tuberosus, *Lam.*  
 Lampusia aquatilis, *Reeve*  
 " lotorium, *Linnæus*  
 " pilearis, *Lamarck*  
 Ranularia gallinago, *Reeve*  
 Septa variegata, *Lamarck* . A magnificent and large species, used as a horn by native bread-sellers, etc.  
 Turritriton vespaceus, *Lam.*

## Fam. MELANIIDÆ

- Melania (several species) . Found in the mountain streams of Tahiti. It does not appear that the species have yet been described.

## Fam. MITRIDÆ

- Cancilla filosa, *Lamarck* . The varied sculpture and beautiful colours of the mitras make them great favourites with collectors.  
 Chrysame ferruginea, *Lam.*  
 " fraga, *Quoy*  
 Costellaria clathrata, *Reeve*  
 " mucronata, *Swainson*  
 Cylindra nucea, *Reeve*  
 Mitra cardinalis, *Lamarck*  
 " episcopalis, "  
 " papalis, *Linnæus*  
 " pellis-serpentis, *Reeve*  
 Pusia nodosa, "  
 " patriarchalis, *Lamarck*  
 Strigatella auriculoides, *Reeve*

## Fam. MURICIDÆ

- Murex ramosus, *Linnæus* . Generally known as "Rock-shells." The quaint, jagged and ramus-like "spines" of the murex proper render it a great favourite for ornamental purposes.

- Purpura armigera, *Chemnitz*  
 Sistrum \* asperum, *Lam.*  
 " cavernosum, *Reeve*  
 " clathratum, *Lam.*  
 " funiculatum, *Reeve*  
 " horridum, *Lam.*  
 " morus, "  
 " ricinus, *Linnæus*  
 " undatum (var.) *Chem.*

Small species, generally found on the coralline rocks close inshore. Beautiful tints will be noted.

\* Some prefer Ricinula, and class Purpura and Sistrum under Fam. Purpuridæ.

## Fam. NASSIDÆ

- Alectrion concinna*, *Powis*  
 ,, *lentiginosa*, = *punctata*, *A. Adams*  
 ,, *papillosa*, *Linnæus*  
*Arcularia granifera*, *Kiener*

## Fam. NATICIDÆ

- Mamilla melanostoma*, *Lamarck*  
*Natica maroccana*, *Chemnitz*  
 ,, (probably *Neverita vesicalis*, *Philippi*)

## Fam. NERITIDÆ

- Nerita plicata*, *Linnæus*  
*Neritina canalis*, *Sowerby* . Fresh water.  
 ,, *siderea*, *Gould*  
 ,, *spinosa*, *Sowerby* . Fresh water.  
 ,, *tahitensis*, *Lesson* . Fresh water.  
 ,, *zebra*, *Lamarck* . Fresh water.

## Fam. OLIVIDÆ

- Oliva cruenta*, *Dillwyn* . . The "Olives" are great favourites. *Cru-*  
 ,, *lentiginosa*, *Reeve* *enta* is much sought after by collectors  
*Olivella* (species) on account of its fine colouring and polish.

## Fam. PATELLIDÆ

- Patella cretacea*, *Reeve* . . Beautiful markings and colours are found  
 in the interiors of "limpet shells" when  
 the animal is removed. A sharp knife is  
 necessary to detach them quickly from the  
 coral "rocks" without damage.

## Fam. PLANAXIDÆ

- Planaxis virgatus*, *Smith*

## Fam. PLEUROTOMIDÆ

- Cythara delacouriana*, *Crosse* Popular name, "Slit lips."

## Fam. PYRAMIDELLIDÆ

- Pyramidella variegata*, *A. Adams*  
*Obeliscus sulcatus*, *Nuttall*

## Fam. SOLARIIDÆ

- Solarium perspectivum*, *Linnæus*

## Fam. SPONDYLIDÆ

Spondylus (species) . . . "Thorny Oysters." The author has one large specimen in which water is enclosed in a cavity in the inner shell; others, similar, have been found. Thus this family has also acquired the popular name of "Water clams."

## Fam. STENOGYRIDÆ

Stenogyra octona, *Chemnitz* A land family, known also as Opeas. These small shells, resembling tapering "screws," have a wide distribution in the tropics, and are even found in British hot-houses, as at Kew Gardens. They are very common in Tahiti, congregating under lava stones and old wood.

## Fam. STROMBIDÆ

Pterocera bryonia, *Deshayes* "Wing-shells." The largest of the class  
 Strombus dentatus, *Linnæus* Gastropoda, but those here quoted are  
 ,, floridus, *Lamarck* relatively small species.  
 ,, gibberulus, *Linnæus*  
 ,, lentiginosus, ,,

## Fam. SUCCINIDÆ

Succinea humerosa, *Gould*

## Fam. TEREBRIDÆ

Impages cærulescens, *Lam.* Tahiti is rich in the "Auger shells," as  
 Myurella affinis, *Gray* members of this family are termed. *T.*  
 ,, columellaris, *Hinds* *duplicata*, *maculata*, *oculata*, and *sub-*  
 Terebra babylonia, *Lamarck* *ulata* are handsome, especially the latter, which is beautifully spotted, and is  
 ,, crenulata, *Linnæus* mainly found on the beach during times  
 ,, duplicata, ,, of the crescent moon; local French  
 ,, maculata, ,, naturalists, at the Brothers' College,  
 ,, monilis, *Quoy* Papeete, call it *T. tigris*.  
 ,, oculata, *Lamarck*  
 ,, subulata, *Linnæus*  
 ,, trochlea, *Deshayes*

## Fam. TURBINELLIDÆ

Cynodonta (or Scolymus) *ceramica*, *Linnæus*



## Fam. TURBINIDÆ

- Turbo concinnus*, *Philippi*  
 ,, *petholatus*, *Linnaeus* The opercula mounted in gold or silver form unique bracelets, brooches, ear-rings, and necklaces.
- ,, (senectus) *setosus*, *Gmelin* Much used as food. The shells, which can be bought in dozens at the market, packed in cocoa-palm baskets, can well be treated with spirits of salts, and then form unique ornaments for the drawing-room. The opercula of this species can well be used as insets to picture-frames, and for other ornamental purposes.

## Fam. VANICORIDÆ \*

*Vanicoro ligata*, *Récluz*

## Fam. VERMETIDÆ

*Vermetus* (species)

NOTE.—It is singular that no specimens of *Volutidæ* were obtained at Tahiti, although the “*Volutes*” inhabit the tropical oceans, and are largely found around Northern Australia. The same remark applies to the *nautilus*. Collectors should always provide themselves with a dredge. Such can be procured at Hearder’s Fishing Tackle Establishment, Plymouth, and the cost is about £1 10s.

## CORALS

It will be sufficient to enumerate a few that are found around Tahiti and in neighbouring waters. The collector will have most ample scope for investigation.

## Fam. PORITIDÆ

*Porites arenosa*

## Fam. FUNGIIDÆ (Mushroom corals)

*Domosieris porosa*

,, *solida*

*Fungia acutidens*

,, *horrida*

,, *Paumotensis*

,, *scutaria*

*Sandalolitha dentata*

\* Some term this family *Neritopsidæ*.

## Fam. MADREPORIDÆ

- Madrepora abrotanoides . Tree corals.  
 ,, arbuscula  
 ,, virgata

Pocillopora pulchella was also obtained.

Especially note that the beautiful co-called "red coral," or hydrozoan of the family Stylasteridæ, and termed *Distich opora granulosa* and another species, *D. conferto*, is found in the Cook Islands, and good specimens were obtained. No attempt was made to collect members of the beautiful and delicate *Gorgoniidæ* family, largely owing to lack of time. This applies also to the magnificent crustacea, as the cocoanut crab (*Birgus latro*); also to sea-anemones, seaweeds, etc.

## SEA URCHINS

The following were collected at Tahiti:—

## Fam. DIAEMATIDÆ

- Diadema saxatile . . . Spines very sharp, a deep brown, and uniform in colour. Widely distributed. Very dangerous to bathers.

## Fam. ECHINIDÆ

- Echinometra lucunter . . . Considerably smaller than the foregoing, and quite as common. Spines thin, sharp, and variegated.  
 Heterocentrotus mam- . . . One of the largest of the family, with very millatus thick and blunt spines; used by natives for food.

NOTE.—A pretty, small sea urchin of the *Spatangidæ* family, termed *Brissopsis Luzonica*, is found in Papeete Harbour at twenty fathoms, but the Author did not obtain a specimen.

## STARFISHES

## FAM. LINCKIIDÆ

Numerous varieties, but *Linckia lævigata* and *Pacifica*, blue ones, can only be identified herein. For half a Chile dollar a Tahiti fisherman will bring great spoils from the reefs and salt lagoons.

## FISHES

- Acanthurus ctenodon*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Acanthurus olivaceus*, Bloch Schneider  
*Acanthurus rhombeus*, Kittler  
 „ *taeniatus*, Günther  
 „ *trioestegus*, Linnæus  
*Anguilla mauritiana*, Bennett  
*Apogon balinensis*, Bleeker  
*Balistes undulatus*, Mungo Park  
*Caranx melampygus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Chalmo longirostris*, Broussel  
*Chartodon bifascialis*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Chartodon ornatissimus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Chartodon vagabundus*, Linnæus  
 „ *vittatus*, Bloch Schneider  
*Cirrhitichthys maculatus*, Lacepède  
*Coris pulcherrima*, Günther  
 „ *elongata*, „  
*Dascyllus aruanus*, Linnæus  
*Diodon hystrix*, „  
*Epinephelus argus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Epinephelus foveatus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Epinephelus merra*, Bloch  
*Exocoetus oligolepis*, Bleeker  
*Fierasfer homei*, Richards  
*Heliastes lepidurus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Hemirhamphus dussumieri*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Heniochus chrysostomus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Holocentrum microstoma*, Günther  
*Julis trilobata*, Lacepède  
*Kuhlia malo*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Liuranus semicinctus*, Bennett  
*Mesoprion marginatus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Mugil kelaartii*, Günther  
*Mulloidis ruber*, Klunzinger  
 „ *samoensis*, Günther  
*Muraena picta*, Ahl  
 „ *reticularis*, Bloch  
*Myripristis murdjan*, Forskal  
*Naseus lituratus*, Forster  
 „ *marginatus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Ophichthys crocodilinus*, Bennett  
*Ostracion cornutus*, Linnæus  
 „ *sebæ*, Bleeker  
*Pentapus aurolineatus*, Lacepède  
*PlatyGLOSSUS hortulanus*, „  
*Pomacentrus lividus*, Bleeker  
*Priacanthus hamrur*, Forskal  
*Rhomboidichthys pantherinus*, Rüppell  
*Scorpæna diabolus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Tetrodon meleagris*, Lacepède  
*ThyrSITES prometheus*, Cuvier and Valenciennes  
*Upeneoides vittatus*, Forskal

One cannot help thinking that if these wonderful fish were cognizant of their names, there would be a general fight for priority. But as they were brought home in spirits, nothing happened, save that a zealous Customs' officer at the Royal Albert Docks persisted in tasting the stuff, and nearly had a fit.

Little do the natives of Tahiti know what they eat.

---

*Re* the Arachnidæ, Hymenoptera, Lepidoptera, Scolopendridæ, etc., pertaining to Tahiti, refer to the text. Many specimens were collected.

The LICHENS and MOSSES of Tahiti are varied and very beautiful. Visitors should collect and dry them, if only as most interesting souvenirs. It is impossible herein to do them justice, and a few only are mentioned. Among the former we may quote *parmelia* (*caperata* probably), a fine white variety found on trees, logs, and rocks, especially up the Fautaua Gorge; and *usnea barbata*, which grows in great luxuriance on the trunks of cocoanut palms, often attaining considerable length and hanging like bearded fringe. This last-named can be woven or plaited into little mats, forming unique objects, with the *asaphis* salt-cellars (see p. 294), and the pearl-shell dessert-plates (see p. 293), for the dinner-table. *Meteorium helictophyllum* and *syrrhopodon banksii* are two of the commonest mosses, particularly found in the gorges, the latter being very compact and beautiful.

## FERNS

The following may be cited—all found in Tahiti:—

Acrostichum (Chrysodium) aureum, <i>Linnæus</i>	Nephrodium (Lastrea) patens, <i>Desvaux</i>
Adiantum hispidulum, <i>Swartz</i>	Nephrodium (Sagenia) decurrens, <i>Baker</i>
Angiopteris evecta, <i>Hoffman</i>	Nephrodium (Sagenia) latifolium, <i>Baker</i>
Aspidium aristatum, <i>Swartz</i>	Nephrolepis hirsutula, <i>Presl</i>
Asplenium caudatum, <i>Forster</i>	Pellea (Cheiloplecton) geraniifolia, <i>Fée</i>
„ cuneatum, <i>Lamarck</i>	Polypodium (Phymatodes) irioides, <i>Lamarck</i>
Blechnum orientale, <i>Linnæus</i>	Polypodium phymatodes, <i>Linnæus</i>
Cyathea (species)	Pteris (Litobrochia) comans, <i>Forster</i>
Davallia elegans, <i>Swartz</i>	Pteris (Litobrochia) tripartita, <i>Forster</i>
„ solida, „	Vittaria elongata, <i>Swartz</i>
„ (Stenoloma) tenuifolia, <i>Swartz</i>	
Gleichenia dichotoma, <i>Hooker</i>	
Nephrodium (Eunephrodium) in- visum, <i>Carruthers</i>	
Nephrodium (Eunephrodium) molle, <i>Desvaux</i>	

The general vegetation is described in the text, and a complete catalogue is beyond the scope of this book.

A few names only of plants collected, very common in Tahiti, are here added :—

*Asclepias curassavica* (Fam. Asclepiadaceæ).

*Crotolaria* (Fam. Leguminosæ).

*Geophila reniformis* (Fam. Rubiaceæ).

*Stachytarpheta* (Fam. Verbenaceæ), looking like a nettle with a small blue flower, and

*Thevetia neriifolia* (Fam. Apocynaceæ).

Any botanist visiting Tahiti will find plenty of work and an ample field.

Natural History collectors, needing items of equipment and good advice, should call at the Store of Captain George Dexter, Papeete. He is well known and highly respected.

## TAHITIAN NAMES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Perhaps a list of the euphonious names, male and female, given by Tahitians to their children will be acceptable, *in addition to* those quoted in the text. Only specially selected ones are cited, and what are understood as surnames are not included.

### Boys'

Afa	Huri	Tamaro
Arëa	Maratai	Teina
Arōma	Punūa	Teiva
Hareau	Taaū	Uētūa

### GIRLS'

Arierou	Moe	Tetuanui (an English equivalent to the affix <i>nui</i> is "my very own darling." It can be used with the others)
Atupu	Natua	Teura
Evoa	Navaerua	Tuta
Hirau	Oru	Vahineura
Irōmëa	Poia	
Mahiné	Rere	
Maraa	Rita	
Metua	Taitua	

## COMMON TO BOTH SEXES \*

Mārāmā  
Marau  
Poura

Teipo  
Terai

Teuira  
Vero

Now, if any fond parents of unbaptized infants in the dear Old Country, Canada, or the Colonies wish to depart, for the sake of novelty, from the stereotyped "John," "William," "Susan," and "Jane," they cannot do better than study the above, and cull therefrom a vowel-appellation redolent of Tahiti and "The Summer Isles of Eden." Remember the Tahitian maxim: "Mind the vowels, and the consonants will look after themselves." It will be just as well to rehearse with the clergyman, and get him to sound every letter, *ringing the vowels with a musical inflexion.*

\* In these cases, Tane or Vahine, meaning male and female, follow the name as distinguishing affixes: thus, Mārāmā-tane, Teipo-vahine.

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